

The Young Chief of the Thirteen Shadowers.

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BUT NEW YORK NAT WAS TOO QUICK FOR HIM, AND HIS WEAPON
FLASHED FIRST.

OR,
**The Girl Queen of the
Boy Police League.**

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

THE MASKED MURDERERS.

"You have killed him!"

"Yes, he is dead, and, masked though you are,
each and every one of you shall hang for this
red crime!"

The speaker was a young girl, and with her last utterance, or threat against strong men, she bowed her face in her hands and crouched down on the floor by the side of the body of the one just slain.

The scene was a strange one, for five men with masked faces had shrunk back from their deed of crime as suddenly into the room a young girl had dashed, her eyes flashing, face livid and whole manner one of intense excitement.

She had not appeared to notice the men who shrunk back at her entrance until she had thrown herself by the side of the dead body, placed her hand over his heart and then, feeling that life was gone forever from him, had uttered the threat that each one of the murderers should hang for their red crime.

"Bah! girl, your threats are harmless; and more—if we do not find that old man's gold, you shall suffer his fate also. So come! where is it hidden? You know and can save us a search," and one of the men stepped toward the kneeling girl.

She sprang to her feet and faced him like a tigress at bay.

"Come, where is the gold? Talk quick if you wish to save your life, for it is no more to us than that old man's."

"That's so! Dead gals, like dead men, tell no tales," growled one of the other men, and drawing a knife he stepped forward as though quite ready to take the young girl's life.

Contrary to the expectation of all, she neither started back, nor cried out; but with a calmness most impressive said in a low, distinct tone:

"I do not know where his gold is hidden, and if I did I would not tell you."

"Ha! you dare defy us?" cried the first speaker, menacingly.

"Yes; for all I loved in the world lies dead at my feet, and what have I to live for, now?"

Her voice had dropped to one full of pathos, its defiant tone subdued by her great grief.

Then, in the silence that followed her words there came, with startling distinctness, uttered by no one knew who, nor from whence it came, and seemingly breathed in their very midst, the words:

"Live for revenge!"

A yell of terror broke from the lips of several of the masked men, for the words seemed to have come from the lips of the dead man, while the effect was rendered more startling by the cry:

"Yes, I will live for revenge. Murderers, I defy you!"

"Men, we are betrayed. Quick or all is lost! Come!"

It was the leader who spoke, and he darted toward the door, not leading his men, for in their terror they had already sprung forward to escape.

But, as he reached the door he cried savagely:

"You shall not escape, girl!"

With the words he threw his hand forward. It held a revolver, and his finger was upon the trigger.

But, the shot was not fired, for, suddenly, there rung through the house the shrill notes of a police whistle, and with it came a shot that shattered the lamp in the room to atoms, leaving all in utter darkness.

With a cry of half-alarm, half-joy, the girl dropped by the side of the murdered man, the silence unbroken now, save by the rapid rush of the fugitive murderers.

A moment passed; the running feet were no longer heard, and silence intense, with a darkness that could be felt, enveloped the mansion, hiding the red deed just committed beneath its roof.

Several minutes passed; then came in a low whisper:

"Where are you, miss?"

The girl started at the whispered words, spoken seemingly at her very side, and

springing to her feet, as she in vain tried to penetrate the darkness about her, she asked:

"Who is it that speaks to me?"

"Only a boy, miss," was the low reply.

"A boy?"

"Yes, miss; but I scared the men away. I was terribly afraid they would kill you."

"But for you they would have done so, I believe. But, who are you?"

"I don't know, miss."

"You don't know who you are?"

"The boys call me Graveyard Jack, miss, and New York Nat, for Nat, I think, is my real name."

"Where are you?" the girl asked.

"I've just come down the chimney, miss," was the quiet response. "Just wait. I'll strike a match and let you see, miss."

CHAPTER II.

"GRAVEYARD JACK."

THE snap of a match was heard, there was a flash of light, then a flickering glare, and the one who had spoken to her was revealed, holding the burning bit of wood above his head and showing himself standing in the large, old-fashioned fireplace, appearing as though he was peering out of some dark cavern.

"There is another lamp—I will light it," and the young girl sprang across the room to the table, where, near the one shattered by the bullet, was a second lamp.

This she quickly lighted, and then turned to gaze upon the one who had so strangely and spooklike come to her rescue.

He had stepped out of the large fireplace, and stood revealed in the strong rays of the lamp—"only a boy," as he had said, for he did not appear to be over fifteen, though well built for his years, and possessing a slender, wiry form, clad in a gray suit, considerably the worse for wear, and with the cap of a messenger-boy upon his head, bearing the letters:

"N. Y. N. OF THE B. P. L."

His face was one to attract any one, so handsome and intelligent it was, with a dash of daring and spirit in it that was unmistakable.

The room he had entered was very large, scantily furnished, with a cot, table and chair only and with the heavy wooden shutters closed and barred.

The dead man lying upon the floor near the cot had his hat on, while, scattered about him, were a number of purchases with which his arms had been filled when the fatal bullet pierced his heart.

The mansion where the tragedy had occurred was a large one, built of brick and stone, surrounded by large grounds, and situated in New York City, not far from the Hudson—the grounds in the rear running back to an old graveyard, from which the ashes of the dead are now being taken from before the march of the living.

The youth stood gazing with as deep interest upon the young girl as she was gazing upon him, for, whatever the motive which had brought him there, he seemed surprised at finding her in the dead man's home.

He beheld a young girl about his own age, for she had hardly yet crossed the threshold of sweet sixteen, and her beauty riveted his eyes upon her.

Her face was refined, her hair golden, her eyes large, lustrous and black, and her form well developed and graceful.

She was well dressed, in blue flannel, that fitted her form well, and as she leaned forward in her eagerness to get a good look at her rescuer her attitude was both graceful and striking.

"So you are called Graveyard Jack?" she said, when she had critically scanned the face of the youth.

"Yes, miss, as well as New York Nat."

"Why do they call you by such terrible names as Graveyard Jack?"

"You won't tell on me?"

"Oh, no."

"Because I live in a graveyard, for any name goes that fits, you see, among the boys."

"You live in a graveyard?" repeated the startled girl, gazing with keener interest at the youth.

"Yes, miss; I live in the graveyard back of this rookery. My home is in a big but unused vault there, and the boys who know it nickname me Graveyard Jack."

"Tell me why you live in the graveyard?"

"I am safe there, miss, for no one comes there to disturb me."

"Safe?"

"Yes, miss; I live in a vault with an iron door, and—"

"And the bodies?" asked the young girl with a shudder.

"They are there, miss, but all sealed up, each in its niche, so they don't disturb me. It's the *live* folks I'm afraid of, not the dead."

"What cause have you to be afraid of any one?"

"The same cause which you had to be afraid of those men awhile since—which poor Miser Maxwell, lying dead on the floor there, had reason to fear—because there are men who are cruel as death itself when they seek gold or revenge."

The boy spoke like one in years older than he appeared to be, and the young girl seemed deeply impressed by his words and manner.

She apparently had forgotten the dead form lying upon the floor, and stood gazing at the youth until he recalled her to herself with the words:

"What was Miser Max to you, miss?"

She started and her face paled once more, her eyes filled with tears, and, kneeling by the side of the still form once more she bowed her head and answered:

"He was my grandfather."

"I did not know he had a soul in the whole world to love him, but me. I feel very sorry for you, miss."

"You loved him then? What was he to you?"

"He saved my life once; that was all, and he gave me food when I was hungry—but listen!"

Both stood silent and attentive now, for a sound had come to their ears, the sound of an approaching step.

Another moment and a voice called out:

"Ho, Cap! is the work done, or am I in time to share in the job and the chink of the old miser?"

As the last word was spoken a man's form stepped into the room, coming through the door by which the murderers had fled a few moments before.

The intruder was masked.

At his appearance the young girl uttered a cry of alarm, and when she beheld his surprise at sight of them and his sudden attempt to draw a weapon, she cowed down in terror.

But, New York Nat was too quick for him and his weapon flashed first.

CHAPTER III.

"MISER MAX."

THE "old houses" of New York City are rapidly being destroyed by the growth of the greater metropolis, but here and there can yet be found one that dates back a century of years, while, hidden by the tall mansions of the rich can even be seen several of the burying places where the dead have slept unmolested through generations.

It was in one of these old-time mansions, surrounded by several acres, thick with evergreens run wild, and by large trees, that a man found a home where he could live apart

from his fellow-men and hoard the gold that he seemed to live solely to accumulate.

The mansion was a large and rambling one, with several wings, a vast cellar, a square tower and altogether dismal in the extreme.

In its day it had been a grand old home; its halls had rung with merry voices, now long since silenced by death, and its possessor had been noted as among the most aristocratic and wealthy in the land.

But, a blight had fallen upon the place when its heiress had one night been killed by the master of the mansion, her own father.

The fair girl had dared to love one whom her father disapproved of because who was a poor struggler for wealth and fame, unknown in the circle in which she was a bright particular star.

The maiden, sought for her beauty, powers of fascination and wealth, had refused the offers of suitors whose names were known well, to love a poor youth, the sailing-master of her father's yacht.

He had sprung overboard one day in a storm, when a wave had washed her off of the vessel's deck, had seized her in his arms, and himself gave the order to lay the yacht to and lower the life-boat.

He had held her unconscious form in his arms until the boat came and picked them both up, and then, when she was safe in her father's care, he had resented as an insult the offer of the rich man to pay him for what he had done.

His angry rebuke of the father caused his discharge when the yacht dropped anchor opposite to the mansion of the owner, but he had soon become the skipper of a small coasting-vessel, and at each coming into port the two lovers—for such the rescued maiden and the young sailor had become—met by stealth.

At length discovering that his beautiful daughter was clandestinely meeting the sailor, the enraged father threatened to shoot the lover, as he would slay a robber, the next time he found him in the grounds; and, to make sure that the young sailor should receive no warning the irate father confined his rebellious daughter to her rooms.

But, Mabel Maxwell was not to be thwarted thus, for love made her brave as well as rebellious.

Determined to meet her lover at all hazards, she secured, through her maid, a suit of male attire and a rope ladder, and so left her rooms one moonlight night when she supposed her father was asleep in his chamber.

It was the night that her lover was to meet her, at the arbor in the grounds, and, gliding among the evergreens she sought the trysting place, when, lo! a flash came, a sharp report rung out, and the father dashed out of the arbor with the words:

"So, thief and villain that you are, you have met your just doom!"

"Father, it is not Nathan Chandler that you have shot down, but I, your daughter Mabel."

With a wild cry, Paul Maxwell fell like one death-stricken by the side of his wounded daughter.

Thus the servants found the two, when, alarmed by the shot and cry they ran to the scene.

It was weeks before Paul Maxwell rallied from the attack of brain fever that followed his mad act, and learned that his daughter died, yet left him her forgiveness.

And more: she told him that months before she had secretly become the wife of Nathan Chandler, and had intended to confess the truth to him and go forever from his home if he was unforgiving.

Paul Maxwell heard all with hard-set face, made no comment, and discharging his servants, closed the mansion, and went abroad, to become a wanderer in foreign lands.

What the poor wanderer's life was, what scenes he passed through no one knew; but, long years after, a score it was, when the memory of his act was almost forgotten, and another generation of people had grown up about his old home—where the city growth had encircled the mansion—he came back to the scene of his tragedy, accompanied by a little girl of ten.

But a few days had the girl remained in the dismal old home; then she had gone away, no one knew where, and the man with stern face and white hair had become known as "Miser Max of the Haunted House."

A complaint had been made by some against him; but it was found that he was the owner of the mansion, so he was undisturbed and there he lived alone, amid the scenes of former years of happiness with those he then loved, haunted by the specter of his great crime in taking the life of his beautiful daughter.

Though worth a large fortune, his only object in life seemed to be to accumulate more. He was from early morn until night-fall doing all in his power to make money and hoard it up.

Why, no one knew, for it was said that he had not a single heir to leave it to, nor a solitary friend on whom to bestow his possessions.

Many of the old people shunned him, in remembrance of his crime in the past, while the children hooted at him as Miser Max, of the Haunted House, and stood in awe of him, too—none of them daring to invade the grounds surrounding the forlorn old mansion.

And it was "Miser Max" whom the masked robbers had slain.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DEADLY SHOT.

THE words of the man who had come into the home of the miser, entering the room where his dead body lay, guarded by the young girl and the youth, told why he was there—that he had expected to meet his pals in the old rookery, and supposed they were counting over the gold of the man they had come there to murder and rob.

The surprise of the masked villain, who had come late upon the scene, was great, as we have seen; but as such miscreants are usually on the alert for anything that may happen, he at once drew his pistol to cover his retreat, if necessary, by another tragedy.

But, Graveyard Jack was too quick for him, for the boy's revolver had flashed in a second of time, and the aim had been deadly.

The masked man sunk in his tracks with not so much as a moan, for the bullet had sunk deep into his forehead.

The girl gazed at the youth, speechless in her terror and amazement, as he stood there cool, silent and watchful.

At last she found the power of speech, and said in a hushed voice full of awe:

"Oh! what have you done—what have you done!"

"Killed him," was the cool response in a wholly unmoved tone.

"Are you sure that he is dead, or has he only fainted?" came in the same hushed voice.

"Men don't faint as women do, and one like him could not faint."

"Then he is dead?"

"Yes."

"You are sure?" and she made a step forward.

"Do you see that little hole in his forehead, just between his hat and the top of his mask, which has slipped down?"

"Yes."

"That's where my bullet hit."

"I wish that you had not killed him."

"Then I would now be as he is," was the reproachful reply.

"Oh, Jack! I did not mean that. I wish that he had run away. But, I saw that he meant to kill you."

"That will save me from being jugged, perhaps from a rope dance, for my own testimony would be no good in a court."

"Must you be tried, do you think, for this act?"

"I guess so, though I wish I didn't have to be. What did you say your name was, miss?"

"Olive."

"It's a pretty name; but I guess I'll take a look at this man and see if I know him."

He stepped forward as he spoke, and with a firm hand removed the black mask from the pallid face.

It was a cruel face even with the scar of death upon it, vicious and sin-stamped.

"It is Brass Knuckles Bill, a tough," said Jack quietly.

"Who is he?"

"You knew him then?"

"Yes, miss, as I know many of the toughs in town."

"He killed a man some years ago, they said, and was sent to State's Prison, served out his term, and when he came back went to robbing, but was too sly to let the cops get a grip on him again."

"His pals called him Brass Knuckles Bill, for he always wore brass knuckles under a glove."

"I guess the cops will be glad to know he is dead, for he is one less of the bad band known as the 'Masked Angels,' and whom the police have never been able to spot, or identify, seeing that their faces were always masked when any crime was committed; but Bill is now spotted, for sure."

"You seem to know much of these wicked men, Jack," sadly said Olive.

"I do, miss, but I hope to know more," was the frank reply.

The girl started at this response, and placing her hand gently upon his shoulder she looked her rescuer squarely in the face and asked:

"Jack, tell me *who* and *what* you are!"

The youth was silent for a moment, his thoughts busy; but, after awhile he responded.

"See here, miss, there are those who think me all that is bad, while the cops are hunting me all the time."

"Why do they hunt you?"

"Because they believe me to be a hard case—a night prowler and burglar's spy—yes, a murderer too."

"And are you bad, Jack?"

"Before God, I am not!"

The words fairly leaped from the lips of the boy, so sudden and vehement they were spoken.

Olive started at the outburst, then she placed her other hand upon the boy's shoulder, and looking him in the eyes as though she would pierce to his inmost soul, said in a voice full of confidence:

"Jack, I believe you—I do not believe you are bad."

"Why don't you?"

"In the first place you came to my rescue, and you drove those bad men off."

"Any one would have done that."

"I don't think so; but, in the second place, you confess that you are called bad, yet if you were so, you would keep the fact hidden."

"Well, miss?"

"In the third place, you would not live in a graveyard if you were wicked and a murderer—a man of evil would not dare do that!"

"Yes, miss?" inquiringly replied Jack, as though expecting another reason.

"You have just killed that ruffian to defend me, and so you are brave, and good, as well; you cannot be bad. No, Jack, whatever you may seem to be to others I believe you are incapable of a criminal life."

CHAPTER V.

THE GIRL WAIF.

JACK seemed to be deeply moved by these words of the young girl, which showed such complete trust in him.

He met her gaze unflinchingly, as he answered:

"I thank you, miss, for not thinking me bad, for I am not and never will be."

"I believe you; but why won't you tell me about yourself?"

"You will have to appear against me at the trial, miss, and—"

"And what?"

"Of course I will be held a prisoner, for the cops will not let me escape."

"Jack."

"Yes, miss."

"Why must there be a trial?"

"What else can be done, miss? There is your father, and the other, whose deaths must be reported by you."

"Must I report them?" asked the girl in a startled way.

"Yes, miss."

"And that means a trial and the whole story must be told?"

"Yes, miss."

"And perhaps my testimony cannot clear you and that you will have to go to prison?"

"That is about it, unless I skip."

"Jack?"

"Yes, miss."

"Can I trust you?"

"You bet you can."

"I will do so."

"I'll stand by you, miss, if you need a friend, for I like you."

The girl smiled, for the confession pleased her; then she added:

"Jack, that is my grandfather, and I am going to tell you all about myself, so perhaps you can tell me what is best to be done."

"Yes, miss; I'll try."

"I do not know much about my past, or my parents, and my grandfather made me vow to him, years ago, that I would never ask about his life, or in any way seek to ferret it out."

"I remember my mother only when she was lying upon her dying bed. She was very poor, and our home was in the poorest quarter of the city."

"My father was a sailor and away on a long cruise when mother died, so I was taken charge of by an organ-grinder, and had to play the tambourine and dance on the streets."

"My little brother was taken by some one else, and I never saw him again."

"Was the organ-grinder kind to you, miss?" asked Jack in a sympathetic way.

"Oh, no; he was so very, very cruel, and he treated me so that I ran away from him, although I was then not nine years of age."

"I was with him for two years, and he traveled from city to city all over the country."

"One thing about him was that he had an education, and he made me study hard, so that I learned a great deal."

"I had to read the papers to him, too, and so I became old before my time."

"At last I ran away from him, and the very next day I saw in the papers, which I still read, how he had been murdered, so I had no fear of his finding me, and felt no sorrow at his death."

"I had saved up some money, and with it I got me a boarding place in a French family and began to sell flowers for a living."

"I made a great deal of money and worked early and late."

"I had good customers in the saloons, in the lowest parts of the city, and also in Wall street and Broadway, while at night I went about the hotels and theaters."

"Some days I made as high as ten dollars profit; and I was growing rich, when one night I returned to my home away down by

Peck Slip to find the house on fire, and every dollar I had hidden away in my little room, going up in flames."

"In my mad fight I dashed into the burning building to try and save my little fortune of nearly a thousand dollars; overcome by the heat and smoke I was giving up when a man seized me in his arms and bore me out to life."

"He gave me into the care of a police captain, and my name being published in the papers the next morning, my father, home from his cruise, saw it and thus found me, when for months he had been looking for me in vain."

"He carried me to his little home on Long Island Sound, and it seemed that I was going to be happy there, with him to care for me; but, ere six months had passed, a small yacht ran into the cove one night, my father was called down to the shore, and, soon after, I saw two flashes, heard two reports, and when the one servant we had and I got to the beach, my father lay there dying from a bullet wound."

"I heard his last words:

"He deemed me guilty, forced me to fight a duel with him and this is the end of it all—no, no, not the end, for my child lives and what will be her fate?"

"Jack, those last words of my father seemed to run into my heart and brain, and I can never forget them."

"I saw him buried by kind friends, and, just as I was being considered what should be done with me, then in my twelfth year, a gentleman came, who said that he was my grandfather, that he was rich and would care for me."

"I caught but one glimpse of him and recognized in him the brave, white-haired man with stern face, who had dashed into the burning building and saved my life."

"Oh, how I loved him for his brave rescue of me from a frightful death! Glad was I to go with him, to find a second father."

"He took me to the city, bought me lots of pretty clothes, and then it was he told me that his life had been one of sorrow and asked me to swear that I would never seek to find out the past."

"I took the oath, and then he brought me here to this very old mansion, for it was his, and here I lived with him for a couple of months, when he took me away to boarding-school, away down South, in New Orleans."

"For years I was kept there, and twice a year saw him for a day only."

"Then, a week ago, when vacation came, he appeared and brought me here with him once more."

"We only arrived this afternoon, and while I set things to rights he went out and bought food for us."

"He had just returned when these cruel men attacked him, and I ran in here to see him lying there, dead, and, with the old spirit of my girlhood training in the Italian organ-grinder's school of revenge, I threatened, I vowed to avenge his death."

"Then you came, Jack, and now you know all I can tell you of Olive, the Little Flower Girl, as I was called."

CHAPTER VI.

NEW YORK NAT'S CONFESSION.

THE boy had listened to the strange story of the girl waif, with an interest that was revealed in his attitude and every feature of his most expressive face.

The circumstances surrounding the two, who were little more than children in years, yet old in the experience of the lives they had led, the old rookery that the neighbors called haunted, the weird graveyard in its rear, the house of the old miser, now lying dead upon the floor, the body of the midnight marauder—all, combined, made a situation that both Jack and Olive could not but feel in all its intensity.

"You have heard my story, Jack, so what would you tell me to do now?"

After a short silence the youth asked:

"May I make a confession?"

"Yes, for then we will both understand each other."

"I will tell you the truth."

"I believe that, Jack."

"I don't know anything about who I am, where I was born, or my parents."

"There is one that does know, and some day I may force him to tell me, but not now."

"I only know that once I was called Nat—that is as far back as I can remember, but after that I was called John, or Jack, though I don't believe it really is my true name. My adopted parents—for I was, for some reason, adopted by a man—lived on the Sound, way below New York."

"I remember I did the chores, went to the village school, helped in the oystering and fishing season, and so became a good sailor for a boy."

"In coming with the vessel to the city I learned much of New York, for I was thrown with a hard lot of men and boys."

"But I liked my home on the Sound until the son of the man who adopted me came there from boarding-school."

"He was the son of his first wife, and though deceiving his father into a belief that he was a good boy, he was the worst one I had ever met."

"One night a burglar broke into the house in the absence of my adopted father, and hearing the noise, I went down-stairs with a pistol."

"I was shot at before I saw the burglar, and returning the fire I killed the burglar."

"To my horror, miss, I recognized my adopted brother, and I ran up to tell his step-mother of the affair."

"She told me to go to my bed again and made no further comment then; but I heard her husband came soon after, and knowing that she had never liked me, for she had been twice married and had a son whom her husband would not allow to come to his home, yet, for some reason had adopted me, though of course I was little else than a servant."

"But, she hated me, and fearing that she might not tell the truth as it was, I crept out on the roof of the piazza, got near their window, and heard her tell how his son had been trying to rob him and I had killed him believing him to be a burglar."

"To my surprise she did tell the truth, and then came his turn to show his feeling for me, as he deliberately plotted with her to shield his son."

"It must never be known that his son was a thief, that he had sought to rob his own father of a large sum of money he knew was then in the house, and, as he was always quarreling with me, and unkind to me, they would state that the son was correcting me in the library, for he was half a dozen years my senior, when I had deliberately shot him."

"What a plot to destroy you!" cried Olive indignantly.

"Oh, they knew I would not harg for it, being too young, but he sent to prison, and it saved the honor of the young man whom I had killed."

"And what did you do?"

"In my terror I naturally supposed I would be hanged, and so I at once made up my mind to fly."

"I went to my room, got the little money I had saved up, crept out of the house and ran down to the shore."

"There was a catboat there and in it I set sail out into the Sound, though there was a storm coming up."

"The storm struck me some miles out from land and my boat was dismasted just at daylight, and filled with water."

But a ship was in sight and I was taken on board just in time to save my life.

"I reported to the captain that I was a young sailor on the coasting crafts that sailed the Sound, had no home, and had been driven out to sea by the storm, so was willing to ship with him as cabin-boy, and I sailed under the name of Nat Chase, and was also known to the sailors as New York Nat. All seemed glad to have me aboard, and I really was happy; and as the ship was bound to Africa, I felt I never would be found by my enemies.

"Well, miss, it proved to be a long voyage for me, and I went from port to port in foreign lands, serving on different vessels, because I did not want to come home. But, at last I was wrecked, and our crew picked up by a steamer bound to New York. So I had to come here again.

"I was alarmed for fear of being recognized, but I had grown considerably, and, having saved up my money, I had enough to give me two years in a good boarding-school.

"I had learned much in knocking about, and, studying hard, I readily acquired knowledge of a different kind.

"But, my money gave out, and I came back to New York to get work of some kind.

"It was no easy task for a boy without a reference, or a friend, and I took to selling papers and blacking boots at odd times.

"It was a hard life, and all that there was of wickedness in the lowest sections of the city, I saw, yet I would not become bad myself.

"I associated with the worst men and boys; I saw the vilest crimes committed, and got to know all the crooks by sight.

"But, one night I saw a murder committed, and under circumstances that I knew I would be held as a witness, if not an accomplice; so I went into hiding.

"I had seen this old rookery, and I came here, for no one was here then, and I soon learned that there was an iron ladder in yonder chimney, and which was hidden by a lid, closing up one flue.

"That is the way I came and left, and I made money as I could, honestly, for I would not steal, no matter what was the temptation; there was something within me that forced me to do right, that protected me.

"One night as I was coming home, my usual way, I heard voices, and, just as I did to-night, I came in time to do good, for that old man was being attacked by two robbers.

"They fled at my approach and he escaped with his life, saving his money also, while I retreated as I had come, he not knowing who had saved him, or how I appeared and departed.

I was glad enough to have saved him for I recalled that one day while swimming in the Hudson, I was seized with a cramp, and Miser Max came to my rescue and saved my life, as I have told you.

"Well, thus finding that the old house was to be occupied, and learning that the occupant was none other than Miser Max, and that he really owned the premises, I felt I must find other quarters although he had always been kind to me.

"In the old cemetery in the rear I often used to go, and found there a vault—the Maxwell vault. This I opened and discovered what to me would not be uncomfortable quarters.

"I got a cot and some other things to make me comfortable, and there made my home or quarters; and after that I was seen so much, going and coming, that everybody gave me the name of Graveyard Jack."

"And what are you doing now for a living, Jack?" asked the girl with deep interest in the strange youth.

"I make my money in various ways, miss: but in truth I am an unknown shadower or detective for the police."

"I don't exactly know what you mean, Jack?"

"Well, miss, I am shadowing crooks and secretly reporting them," was the whispered response.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISER'S TREASURE.

THE two, the young girl Olive, whose life had been such a strange romance, and the youth Jack, or New York Nat as he had been called by his sailor comrades, whose career had been one equally as remarkable, looked at each other with eyes that seemed to wish to read the very soul of the one they so intently regarded.

Had they heard the truth in all?

Had each one told truthfully the story of his and her life?

Was there nothing kept back?

Could it be that such strange romance, such reality could be in their lives?

If such thoughts flashed through their minds they did not reveal upon their faces the doubt and anxiety that must arise.

Upon the face of the boy there was only trust in the one whom he had thus met and served so well.

Upon the face of the woman there appeared to be an expression of joy in having met one so allied to her by adversity, sorrow, suffering and romance.

"Do you believe my story, miss?"

So asked the lad, when minutes had gone by and not a word had the girl spoken.

Her answer revealed that his confession was believed, for she said:

"Don't call me *miss*—call me Olive, as I will call you Jack or Nat, as you prefer."

"Jack let it be, for the present, until I find out more about myself, as I am bound to do. You believe me then?"

"Of course I do; why should I doubt you any more than you do me?"

"I could not doubt *you*, miss."

"There you go again."

"I meant *Olive*."

"And I could not doubt you, Jack."

"Then we are to be friends?"

Her answer was to hold out her hand

"But, what are you to do, Olive?"

"I don't know."

"What shall I do?"

"We must talk it over."

"Yes."

"Your grandfather is dead."

"Alas, yes. I am all alone in the world now, for I do not know of a single relative I have."

"What did your grandfather intend you should do?"

"I do not know; he told me that I was the heiress to all of his riches, and that his will was so made, and placed in the hands of an attorney, while his every effort had been to make money to leave me.

"He told me all this in coming on from New Orleans, for I left school and met him, by his request, in Memphis.

"He wished me to spend the vacation with him and then return to school in New York, where I could be near him, for he told me he had a presentiment that his death was not far off, but when he died I would be his heir, and to a very large fortune.

"You know that I told you we had just arrived, only to-day, and that is all that I know."

"Did he tell you that he had money not in the bank, or in his attorney's hands?"

"No."

"Did he say who his attorney was?"

"No."

"But his will was made out and in his hands?"

"Yes."

"I know who his lawyer is."

"You do? Who is he?"

"His name is Brackette; that much I know."

"How do you know, Jack?"

The youth silently pointed to the chimney and as Olive said no more he remarked:

"I don't know why, but after having run those fellows off from their attack on Miser Max, I often kept an eye upon him.

"Maybe it was because I liked company on winter nights, and found the vault cold, its dead folks no company; but I did come here, climb down the chimney and often heard Miser Max talk to himself, for he used to say a great deal. I heard him add up his accounts, count over his money and, time and again, speak of Lawyer Brackette—I think he said Adam Brackette, who had his will in keeping, and yet he hinted that he did not know all that he was worth."

"He told me that he was daily striving for money, that people called him an old miser, yet he was laying up riches with one sole purpose in view.

"He said it was all for me—that I was his sole heir; but has he money here?"

"Yes, and that is why the Masked Angels came here to rob him. They could not force him to tell where it was, so killed him."

"My poor, poor grandfather!" and Olive looked sadly down into the face of the corpse, whose hands Jack had folded upon his breast.

"I know where his treasure is hidden."

"You know, Jack?"

"I do."

"Where?"

"Up in a closet in that chimney."

"Oh, Jack!"

"It is true, for there he kept it hidden, and no one would suspect it.

"Come, peer up the chimney. It looks like one flue—see—well, one is the chimney proper, the other a false flue, and, by raising this iron ladder is revealed—see!"

He had taken the lamp and led Olive to the fireplace, explaining all as he spoke.

"Now hold the lamp and I'll bring you the treasure."

He pushed up the iron shutter, drew himself up into the chimney, and, in a few minutes, came down again.

When he did so he had swung about him several canvas bags that seemed very heavy. These he placed upon the table with the remark:

"There is Miser Max's treasure, Olive, and you are his heiress."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TWO DETECTIVES.

If anything in the way of doubt had lingered in the mind of the young girl, as to the honesty of the youth who had so fortunately and strangely crossed her path, his act in bringing to her the treasure of the miser could not but have removed it.

"How long have you known of this treasure being there, Jack?" she asked.

"Oh, for a long time. I stumbled upon it when I hid in the chimney one day, for I thought I heard some one entering the brown house."

"You are an honest fellow indeed, Jack."

"Because I don't take that which is not mine?"

"Oh no; I would not steal, and I never told the secret of its being there to any of the boys, for the only one I can vouch for is myself—and *you*, now."

"Thank you, Jack, for the trust in me."

"But now, about this treasure?"

"Yes, and *those*, pointing significantly to the bodies.

The girl seemed at times to forget that she was in the presence of the dead, her position was such an odd one to her.

She had seen much of wickedness, misery, crime and tragedy in her earlier years, and her school days had made her regard the past almost as a dream.

But she had not forgotten the experience of her girlhood and took matters calmly.

Now, recalled to herself, her surroundings

and what was before her, she at once nerved herself to act, and said:

"I suppose this treasure is mine, Jack?"

"Of course it is, for you are Miser Max's granddaughter. He had no other heirs; he made a will; this is his own home; he brought you here; you are in possession and you've got the boodle."

Olive laughed in spite of herself and said:

"Argued like a lawyer, Jack, and you have won the case for me."

"Now, what is to be done?"

"You want my advice?"

"Yes, indeed. Who else can I go to?"

"What do you wish to do?"

"I have no one in the world to go to, no one to ask the protection of."

"Oh, I'll protect you as far as that goes," was the ready reply.

"Well, what am I to do?"

"It's vacation time, so you can't go back to school."

"No."

"You don't wish to go and see the lawyer, Brackette?"

"Not yet."

"You are not afraid to live here, are you?"

"Not if I had you here as a protector, as a brother to me."

"I'll be your brother you bet; but I've got an idea."

"Give it to me, Jack."

"You are not of age, and if you go to the lawyer he'll finger all your money for you, sure, and it might stick to his fingers too tight to get it out of his hands again."

"Very true; I have heard lawyers are slippery."

"Slippery? Well, I should remark!

"If they were not they could not gain their cases; but you don't know just how your grandfather's will reads, and you have got cash enough here to take care of you."

"Yes, and I have more in my room, for grandpa was very generous with me and gave me considerable money."

"I heard you say that you loved him dearly."

"I did, indeed, for he saved me from burning to death, as I told you, and at the risk of his own life."

"Then he came for me after my father's death and has cared for me so generously ever since—how could I help loving him even if he was not my real own grandfather?"

"That's so; but I heard you say you would avenge his death."

Her eyes flashed and she answered quickly:

"I did vow to do so, and I *will*, for his murderers must be brought to justice for the horrible crime."

"That is just my way of thinking, and you can do it, for I will help you—that is if you are willing to go, pards with me."

"Indeed, I am, Jack, for I trust you, and I rely wholly upon you in my time of need, for I have no one else."

"All right; that settles it; pals we will be!"

"Jack, I don't like the word *pals*."

"Call it pards, then, or comrades."

"Then, comrades it will be. Now, what do you propose?"

"If I am known in this case I'll be put in prison just because they cannot find the real murderer, and my record as Graveyard Jack is against me with the cops."

"Yes."

"Now, instead of being a crook, as I told you, I am a crook-chaser, and I have sent in secretly a great deal of information to the chief, but I dare not do it openly or be known in the matter either to him or to those I spy on."

"I understand, Jack; but you have the consciousness of knowing that you are doing right."

"Just that; and if you will turn detective

and shadower with me, Olive, we can form a league of crook catchers and take in the town," said Jack, with great enthusiasm.

"I'll do it, Jack, for then I can keep my oath to avenge the murder of that poor old man—yes, *we will be fellow ferrets in the good work*, if you think I can be of real help to you."

CHAPTER IX.

THE COMPACT.

OLIVE held out her hand as she spoke, and that sealed the compact of the two to be ferret-detective pards.

The early training of the girl caused her to really like the work she would be called upon to do, as a shadower, when under other circumstances she would have shrunk from it with fear and aversion.

She had seen much of the lowest order of life, and the Italian organ-grinder, through all his instructions to her in book learning, had instilled in her mind the duty of revenge against any one who had wronged her.

There lay dead at her feet the one who had been all in the world to her. He had been ruthlessly murdered for his gold, and she, too, would have shared his fate but for Graveyard Jack's timely coming to her rescue.

Must she allow those murderers to go unpunished, especially when the boy's presence opened a way to bring them to justice and so avenge her grandfather's death?

No! A strange destiny seemed to be shaping her life and she would be guided by it.

And so it was that she formed the compact with Graveyard Jack, as Nat was destined, apparently, to be called.

"Now what is to be done, Jack?" she asked, having fully decided upon her course.

"You have your room here?"

"Yes, where grandfather placed me, and the same I had years ago."

"You will have to get quarters elsewhere until the fuss blows over."

"Why?"

"Well, neither you nor I can go and tell the chief that these dead bodies are here, so I will do so in the secret way I have been already doing."

"Yes."

"I'll simply state that Miser Max was attacked in his home by robbers, lost his life at their hands and one of the robbers was killed, while both bodies will be found in the old rookery."

"Yes, and grandfather's lawyer will come and give him decent burial?"

"He will; and the heirs will be written to, and it will be found that you left your school in New Orleans and search will be made for you."

"But, they must not find me, Jack!"

"Not until you wish to be found, Olive, and you will know when that is."

"Of course a watch will be set upon the house for a week or more, but the lawyer will find no one willing to stay here, especially after this last tragedy in the old lodging. After awhile you can move back and make yourself comfortable, while I will also take up my quarters here and it will be the secret meeting-place of our league."

"What league, Jack?"

"Ah! I meant to tell you that I was forming a band of boys to serve under me, and to be known as the Boy Police League."

"I will have thirteen, including myself, and our duty will be to get onto all kinds of deviltry going on in the city, and report it every Sunday night, when I am to put the facts before the chief, but not let him know who gives the information, or how it is obtained."

"It will be lots of fun in fooling him, for of course he will have his detectives out trying to run us down, but that I am determined he shall not do."

"Now you, Olive, shall be the Queen of

the Boy Police League, and I'll be captain, and you bet we will astonish the chief in the secret information we give him, as well as the crooks we shall make it our business to run in."

"Now what do you say, Olive?"

"I am with you, heart and hand! Yes, and my money, too, in the good work, for I can now see a sure way to capture those masked murderers."

"Oh, yes; we'll get onto them in time, sure."

"Remember, all the treasure is at your disposal, Jack."

"Go slow with your treasure, Olive, for I have several hundreds laid up, and each one of the league is compelled to pay an entrance fee of fifty dollars, so that gives us plenty to work on as a starter, and it will be time to call on you when the treasury goes broke."

"You see, none of us are going to put up at the Fifth Avenue or Hoffman House, or ride in carriages, so our expenses will be light."

"Yes, but you will need money to work with, and when you do, call on me as one of the band."

"The queen of our outfit, you mean. I will do so, if we have to. But now, where are your traps?"

"I have the checks for my trunks, and grandpa intended having them sent up tomorrow."

"Good! I am glad they are not here, for they would be hard to hide from the keen eyes of the ferrets and cops."

"I know a place you can be safe in, and the lady will take good care of you, for I pulled her little children out of the Hudson one day when they were upset in a row-boat."

"She is not rich, but owns her little home and you will be comfortable with her, I promise you."

"I have no doubt of that Jack; but, I have here only a sachel, in my room, and I will make it appear as though I had not been there, while these things brought by poor grandpa for our supper, had better remain just where he dropped them."

"Yes, and yet you must take your treasure with you, for the place *might* be occupied, you know, and I will carry it for you."

The two then set to work to destroy all traces of Olive having come home with her grandfather, the treasure was wrapped up and Nat was to carry it. The two bodies were left as they had fallen, the impression being given that the miser had killed the man who lay near him.

New York Nat made a search of the masked man and the miser's bodies, and what he found he wrapped in a handkerchief and gave to Olive to place in her sachel.

Then he took up the sachel and bundle of treasure and left the rooms, while Olive dropped upon her knees by the side of the body of her grandfather and pressed her lips in farewell upon the cold forehead.

"I am ready, Jack," she said with quivering voice, and the two, leaving the lamp burning, departed from the old mansion, the youth leading the way through the darkness.

CHAPTER X.

SECRET INFORMATION.

THE chief of the Secret Service Bureau of the great city of New York, a position demanding as much skill, ability and pluck as to command an army in the field, set alone in his private office the morning of the double tragedy in the old Haunted House, and was busily engaged in looking over the morning reports of his office, when an attendant brought in the information that a lady wished to see him.

"Who is she, Matt?"

"I do not know her, sir, but she has white hair and seems very feeble."

"Show her in."

A moment after a lady in mourning entered the room and just partly removed her veil as she bowed to the chief, who said politely:

"Be seated, madam, and tell me how I can serve you?"

"I know you are most busy, sir, and yet here is something you should know, as I am informed by the one who gave it to me."

"And who gave it to you, madam?" said the chief, taking the sealed envelope handed to him, and which bore his name and address.

"That I do not know, sir, but a youth gave it to me and said that he wished me to do a good act—that is to bring you this letter, and before I could ask him more he was gone in the crowd. I felt that it was my duty to come to you, sir."

"You did right, madam," and the chief had already broken the seal, which he was gazing at curiously.

It was of black wax and the imprint upon it was a most peculiar one, a human skull held in a hand of flesh, while beneath it was a skeleton hand clasping one of flesh and blood.

"Ha! I have seen this strange seal before!" and the chief hastily glanced over the letter, which was written in a bold hand as follows:

"A murder was committed in the old rookery on —th street last night, known as Miser Max's Mansion and the Haunted House.

"Robbers attempted to rob the miser, but he resisted and was killed. One of the robbers, in the attack also lost his life.

"Their bodies now lie in the old mansion, awaiting your action.

"THE UNKNOWN SHADOWER."

"Do you know the contents of this letter, madam?"

"Indeed, sir, I do not."

"You never saw the one who gave it to you before to-day?"

"No, sir."

"Would you know him if you saw him again?"

"I think so, sir."

"Where do you live?"

"Number 13 West — street, sir."

"Thank you, madam," and the visitor took her departure.

But, hardly had the door closed upon her when the chief touched one of a number of buttons on the desk before him.

A man in civilian's dress at once appeared through a side door, and the chief said quickly:

"Detective Sloan, an old lady in black, with white hair and walking feebly, just left here.

"Shadow her and let me know with what result."

Detective Lucas Sloan saluted and at once left the chief's quarters, the latter touching his bell for his attendant.

"Matt, send Captain Williamson to me."

The captain, a handsome man with military bearing, came in after a short delay and the chief handed him the secret letter he had received.

"Ah! this is surprising information, sir, but from whom?"

"That is what I cannot tell you. You see the stamp on the seal?"

"Yes, sir, a strange one, certainly."

"Yes, and the signature is simply, as you see:

"The Unknown Shadower."

"That gives you no clue, sir."

"Not in the least as to who my informant is, but I wish to tell you that this is by no means the first information I have received from this same mysterious source."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes; I have had a score of just such communications."

"But of any value, sir?"

"So much, indeed, that not once has my information been false. I have not spoken of it to any one, for I had hoped to entrap my informant, but in vain.

"Each time the secret information has come in a most mysterious manner. Once it came by registered letter; again I found it on the floor, evidently shoved under the door of my private office, while I once got an important message by Express.

"A tramp brought me a letter on another occasion; then an old negro man; again a young girl, and this last was brought to me by an aged lady in mourning.

"I have placed Sloan upon her track, so may discover something of my mysterious informant, though I half believe she told the truth about how she got it."

"It is certainly most mysterious, sir; but in each case you say that the information has been of value?"

"Most valuable indeed, for when you raided the gold counterfeiters, it was through information I gave you, which I got from The Unknown Shadower, and you tracked the murderer Cox, by the same means, while others have been caught through my giving clues, and each time The Unknown Shadower has been the one to give me the pointers.

"I tell you, Captain Williamson, this secret information I receive is most mysterious; but now go to that old rookery and see if this news is not correct."

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM "THE UNKNOWN SHADOWER."

CAPTAIN WILLIAMSON found it as the mysterious communication had stated: there were two dead men lying in the old mansion, one Miser Max; the other was recognized by the police as one of the worst crooks in the city.

They were glad that this ruffian had met his death, for he at least was off their hands; but who had been his pals, where were they, how many, and had they gotten the miser's gold?

These questions the most cunning of the regulars could not answer.

The old residence revealed only that Miser Max made his home there, sleeping in one room, cooking and eating in another, as far as appearances went.

The house was only partly furnished, much of its furniture having been stolen, or sold years before, and what there was showed the touches of time and was in bad condition.

The wardrobe of the old man was found to be rather extensive, consisting of several suits of good clothing, shoes and hats and other articles but little worn.

He was known to have done his own work, except his laundrying, which was done by a Chinaman near.

He paid cash for his groceries, and all else he bought, and was supposed to have laid up a large sum of money, which he kept near him.

It came out that he had bought land in different parts of the city, sold it at a good profit, and always had ready cash with which he entered into only the safest speculations.

The mansion and its surrounding acres belonged to him. There was no mortgage upon it, the taxes were paid up in full, and all other valuable property he held also was free of debt.

This much was found out from the lawyer, Brackette, who had the miser's will in his possession, with other documents left in his charge.

The story came out that Miser Max had an heir, a granddaughter, then at boarding-school in New Orleans, and Lawyer Brackette went there after her but only to find that she had left at the close of the term, she said, to join her grandfather North.

Search was at once made for the missing

heir, by both the lawyer and the chief of the Secret Service; but in vain; not the slightest clue could be found to her whereabouts since she had left New Orleans for the North.

So here was another mystery in connection with the murder of Miser Max, and the police, after careful consideration, took to the theory that those who had killed the grandfather had also spirited away the girl, to hold for future schemes for getting gold; or perhaps had done away with her to hide their capital crime.

No happening in the great metropolis is more than a nine days' wonder, and so, after a couple of weeks of giving startling headlines and sensation reports, the papers were glad to drop the mystery, which their ferret-like reporters, cunning and skillful as so many of them are, could not fathom.

So Miser Max, his tragic death, the missing heir and the unclaimed fortune soon dropped out of the public mind.

But such was not the case with the chief, his detectives and the police.

They were each and all of them anxious to solve the mystery, and were glad to have the papers let up on the affair so as to lull all suspicion.

Miser Max had been buried decently in Greenwood, Lawyer Brackette paying all expenses. The dead burglar had been given a pine box and a resting-place in Potter's Field, among those who had been kindred spirits in his life of evil.

The old mansion, doubly haunted since the latest tragedy beneath its roof, had been watched by a squad of police for awhile. Then it was locked and shut up securely, and the key given up to Lawyer Brackette, who had inserted in the *Herald* a "Personal," offering a large reward for the finding of Olive Maxwell the missing heiress.

The chief, however, kept a detective secretly shadowing the old house for many days, trying in vain to get a clue to some one who might go there, for he had an idea that his unknown informant of the murder there, might be in some way connected with the place or the men who committed the murder.

But, as time passed and no one was seen to enter the grounds, the Headquarters shadower was withdrawn.

Strange to say, that very day came a messenger-boy with a letter for the chief.

It bore the same seal of black, had the same peculiar stamp and read as follows:

"The missing heiress will turn up in good time to claim the fortune left her by Miser Max.

"Meanwhile, give Lawyer Brackette a hint that the property does not belong to him, and not to monkey with what was left to another, or he may get into trouble.

"Expect further information, when the time comes to give it, from

"THE UNKNOWN SHADOWER."

"Boy, where did you get this letter?" demanded the chief in a tone that startled the young messenger.

"At the office, sir."

"Who gave it to you?"

"A young lady, sir, and she said as how I was to give it only into your hands."

"Do you know her?"

"No, sir."

"Ever seen her before?"

"No, sir."

A button was touched, a detective appeared, and the chief ordered:

"Go to the Broadway office with this boy, find out if he tells the truth, and see if you can discover any trace of the one who gave him this letter to bring to me."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHIEF MORE THAN MYSTIFIED.

THE chief was certainly mystified regarding the identity of his unknown correspond-

ent, one who sent him strange communications there was no accounting for.

If they had come from his own men, why had not the informant appeared to draw the rewards which in several cases awaited him?

The news he received was of all kinds, and of deeds done in every part of the city, showing that the unknown detective was most thoroughly posted as regarded the haunts of the crooks, and of their movements.

Now came a hint that the heiress to the Haunted House would appear in good time, and that it would be well to keep an eye upon the attorney who had her fortune in his control.

The chief knew the lawyer as one who stood well in the city, was a member of a church, and upon whom no suspicion of wrong-doing had ever fallen.

But appearances, he had found in his eventful career, were most deceiving; so he decided that he would at least make a call upon Adam Brackette, Esq., and have a talk with him, as now was his duty.

The detective sent to shadow the old lady who had brought the news of the murder of the miser, had returned with the information that she was just who she had represented herself to be, and the chief felt certain that she had received the letter, as she had stated.

The officer sent back with the messenger-boy returned to say that a young lady had brought the letter in, asked for a trusty boy and had paid the fee and departed.

No one there knew her, or could tell where she had gone, and, as she did not return to see if there was any response, there was no clue to her identity.

"I will now go and see the lawyer," decided the bewildered chief.

Lawyer Brackette was a shrewd man. He wore a beard but had shaved his mustache off—a style that gives one a sly or half-sinister expression.

He was said to be a good man; he gave of his earnings to charity; he had several Chinese in the Sunday-school class he taught; he was respected and admired by his fellow church members, for his probity and apparent goodness of heart.

The chief was ushered into his inner office, and at once spoke of the reason for his calling.

"Of course it is none of my affair, Mr. Brackette, but I am anxious to find the murderer of Miser Max, and also his missing heir, so would like what information you care to give me regarding your dead client, his wealth and the heiress, for a word often is a clue, you know."

"Very true, sir, very true. My late client was a singularly close-mouthed man; had little to say about himself, though you doubtless know that he it was, who, many years ago, shot his daughter when she was masquerading in man's attire one night, mistaking her for a burglar?"

"Yes, I have heard the story."

"She was his only child?"

"She was, and it nearly killed him; but he rallied, went abroad, and, after years of travel, returned to New York."

"He came to me, for my senior partner had been his lawyer, and placed his will in my hands, with deeds to certain property he owned, and only told me that he had found a granddaughter, but whose child she was he did not reveal, but he legally adopted her as his own."

"Did he have money at his home?"

"I believe he did, for he hinted as much."

"Then that the murderers must have secured?"

"I am afraid so, for I made a most thorough search of the place and could find nothing of value."

"And you have heard nothing of the missing heiress?"

"Not a word."

"What power does the will give you?"

"Full powers, sir, to act as though the property was my own."

"Remarkable powers, sir, indeed. But, I have a clue—just what, I cannot now tell you; but I hope that before very long I can find you the missing girl, alive and well."

"Indeed, sir! I shall be delighted!" replied the lawyer, and yet the chief, who read the human face as an open book, determined that, contrary to what the attorney asserted, the man was keenly disappointed.

But, the officer did not tell him so, and continued:

"Of course a property left as this has been, in your keeping, attracts considerable attention, and I need hardly tell you that there are those who are only too anxious to get it out of your keeping, so, in a friendly way, Mr. Brackette, I would advise you to give them no hold upon you. Give no information, make no concessions."

"Your words mean more, sir, than you care to explain," said the lawyer, in a tone of concern.

"I am in a position to hear much, sir, yet not free to explain, so I simply give you a hint that you have foes who will try to give you trouble, should the heiress appear suddenly, and you not be prepared to answer fully to the confidence bestowed on you by Miser Max. If I get further information, I will call again."

The chief departed, leaving the man-of-law completely mystified and in a frame of mind that was not enviable, for he muttered to himself:

"I have spies upon my movements, that is certain, so it is lucky the warning came as it did."

And the chief walked back to his office musing:

"That man is a hypocrite. He is tricky; he plots and plans for self, alone. But the hint I gave him will cause him to go slow; that it frightened him was evident to me."

Upon returning to his office the chief saw a letter upon his desk, sealed as were all the mysterious communications he had received.

Instantly he rung for his attendant, and asked who had brought it.

The attendant did not know; he had gone out to lunch for a few minutes and had seen no one enter the office.

And no one else could tell how the letter had come upon the chief's private desk!

"By the heavens above, but I believe I myself am shadowed," the chief exclaimed aloud, and, now doubly mystified, he turned to the new letter and broke the black seal.

CHAPTER XIII.

A WARNING.

"ANOTHER important communication and in the same handwriting as before, bearing, too, the black seal and its weird crest and the signature of 'The Unknown Shadower.'"

"I will see what Williamson thinks of it," and the chief rung and requested the immediate presence of his trusty aid, Captain Williamson.

The captain soon appeared, when the chief silently placed the missive in his hand.

It was read through in silence and then the chief said:

"Read it aloud."

The captain read as follows:

"I desire to inform you that there is a plot among the crooks to board the yacht Ideal to-night and rob her."

"She lies at the foot of West Sixteenth street, and is all ready to sail to-morrow on a long cruise, so that she has on board valuable stores, money and silver plate of much value, while her crew, with the exception of a few men, will be allowed to spend the night ashore."

"One of the crew is a crook and will

drug those on board, so that there will be no opposition to the boarders, who will go out to the yacht as a party of ladies and gentlemen."

"The crook who is the spy is a Frenchman who answers to the name of Pierre, and is boatswain."

"Make no move to protect the yacht until after dark, then be on hand."

"THE UNKNOWN SHADOWER."

"P. S. The owner's wife and a lady friend have sent their trunks on board, and they have valuable jewels in them."

"Well, captain, what have you to say to that?" asked the chief.

"You believe it, sir?"

"Why not? My unknown detective has never yet put me on a false scent—never failed to tell the truth!"

"You have not the slightest clue to his identity?"

"No more than have you."

"It is remarkable, sir."

"It bears the same black seal as the notice of Miser Max having been murdered."

"It does, and is on the same paper and is in the same handwriting."

"The paper and writing may be a clue, sir."

"The paper is of the plainest kind, with no water lines, and the writing, as you see, is in a disguised hand."

"True, sir; but you will heed the warning?"

"Of course! So take it in hand."

"I will board after dark, sir, as a party pretending to believe that the owner is on board, and desires to visit him."

"A good idea, captain."

"The boatswain can be lured into the cabin and captured, and the crew can be sent back in my boat, leaving my men on board."

"That will catch the gang, especially if you can force the Frenchman to confess."

"Yes, sir."

"Then go and arrange your plan, but work with the greatest caution, Williamson, taking only picked men, for I have reason to believe that we have a spy in our own camp."

"A spy here, sir?"

"Yes; for this letter I found on my desk, and no one knows how it got there."

"That does look suspicious, sir."

"It does; so set a trap to catch the spy, for he must be found out at all hazards."

Captain Williamson shook his head like one in a quandary, and replied:

"Yes, sir, for this is something I cannot understand, when your own quarters are shadowed," and the captain went to pick half a dozen good men for the night's work.

It was just after dark when his boat pushed off from the shore at Fiftieth street, with two strong men at the oars.

No sooner had it left the shore when a couple of sachels were opened and out of them were taken four feminine wraps and bonnets, a couple of high hats and other disguises.

"Aboy the Ideal!" called out the captain, who had the appearance of a Wall street man, as they came near a handsome schooner yacht anchored in the stream.

"Ay! ay! what is it?" asked a gruff voice from the deck.

"We are a party of friends come out to say good-by to Mr. Rochelle."

"Mr. Rochelle will not come off until to-morrow noon."

"Is none of the sailing party aboard?"

"No, sir, only myself and four of the crew," and the man spoke with a foreign accent.

"Well, my man, we have a present for Mr. Rochelle, and will board and leave it in the cabin with a letter, for you can give us a paper and pen, I guess," and the disguised police captain leaped aboard and thrust a bank-note into the hand of the boatswain.

"Yes, sir, just come into the cabin, only

please do not stay long, for Mr. Rochelle's orders were that no one was to be allowed aboard."

The captain and the pretended ladies followed the boatswain into the cabin, and suddenly he looked squarely into the face of a revolver and heard the words:

"You are my prisoner, sir."

With an oath the man started to run from the cabin, but he was seized by the ladies and in an instant he was handcuffed and gagged.

"Now order the crew here," was the captain's order, and throwing off their feminine garb the officers obeyed and the surprised crew learned that there was a plot to rob the yacht and they must submit to being held prisoners until the robbers were secured.

Then they told how the boatswain had promised to treat them to some wine, after all got quiet, and said that he had the bottles already hidden away.

"That wine is drugged," sternly said the captain, and with "dummies" in the boat, for fear the robbers might then be watching, it pulled away from the yacht, to await off on the river a recall signal.

"The boatswain told me, sir, to set at nine o'clock a signal that the owner was ashore, and it would prevent any friends from coming off," said one of the crew.

"Set it," was the laconic response of the captain.

"And you will find that the boatswain's friends will come off, and those are the ones we wish to welcome."

The signal lantern was set, the police officers took their places, and all was ready for the reception of the boatswain's guests.

CHAPTER XIV.

LIKE RATS IN A TRAP.

It was just after midnight when a boat was seen coming off from the shore and heading for the yacht.

There appeared to be three men in it besides the two oarsmen, and as it came nearer a voice called out:

"Yacht Ideal O. K."

"O. K!" came the answer.

The next instant the boat ran alongside and a man standing forward and muffled up called out in a quick, low tone:

"Get down below all of you until that police boat goes by."

Those thus addressed did not, from their rapid movements, seem to like the name of a police boat, for, without waiting to see where it was they fairly tumbled down the steerage hatch, while the muffled form made their boat secure.

"Say, we've got to go quiet, so one of you come up at a time, and walk about like the crew, for there has been a boat out here to-night that looks suspicious."

The words were whispered down into the hold, and spoken with a foreign accent, and a voice answered:

"All right, cully; you play ther music and we'll dance to it. Is the salt water gang asleep?"

"Yes; now you come out and walk right to the cabin!"

A man came out; a sign of warning from the muffled form kept him quiet and he went off and entered the cabin.

"Now, mate," and a second man was called out and directed to the cabin.

Thus the others were called until the five river pirates were caught like rats in a trap, for each one, on his descent into the cabin, had been seized on each side by powerful men whose grip on his throat and arms he could not throw off, and in an instant found himself manacled and gagged.

"Set the signal, my man, for Mr. Rochelle to come off, for he has been notified and will understand it," ordered Captain Williamson, coming out of the cabin and addressing one of his officers, the man who had impersonated the French boatswain,

The signal brought also the captain's boat, which had been in waiting, as well as that of the handsome young yachtsman, Rochelle, who was accompanied by the Secret Service chief.

"All right, captain?" asked the chief as he stepped on deck.

"Yes, sir, without a life lost."

"How on earth did you discover the plot to rob me?" asked Mr. Rochelle.

"The plot was made known to me by one I do not know, sir, and, being thus warned, to do the work was easy."

"And that man Pierre, my boatswain, was the traitor?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will leave him in your hands, chief; but I wish to ask your men to divide this check among them."

"Thank you; but I must say no, Mr. Rochelle, for they have simply done their duty. Who is the one that gave the warning I cannot tell you."

"Then give him the check."

"I could not, sir, if I would, for, as I say, I do not know who he is."

"Not know who your informant of the plot to rob me was? Why, that is remarkable."

"Just that, Mr. Rochelle; it is remarkable. But this confession I must ask you to receive in confidence, for if it becomes known how I received the information, it might get some one into trouble. Some day I hope to be able to inform you, sir."

"I sincerely hope you may," and the young yachtsman continued in a low tone:

"Do you know that I have more aboard my yacht than you imagine, for my partner, an Englishman, now at home, wished me to bring him over a lot of gold nuggets which he himself had mined, and their value is all of fifty thousand dollars, while I have in the cabin safe some thousands in money, and also jewelry belonging to my wife, of considerable value, not to speak of silver-plate and other things."

"Yes, sir, your mysterious informant has saved me a small fortune, and whenever you name him to me, he shall be paid a most liberal reward."

"He deserves it, sir, and I would give a liberal reward to know who he is," bluntly declared the chief.

Leaving several of his men on board as a guard, until the crew returned in the morning, the chief then departed, Williamson taking his prisoner to jail, which place they had the certainty of leaving, to go to States Prison for a long term of years, and which caused the French boatman to say:

"Well, monsieur, zere vas nopody kilt, so you vill not have ze plasair of hanging me up wiz a rope."

"Don't be so sure of that, Frenchy, for I have an idea you are a very bad man, and we will have to look up your past record," assured Captain Williamson, and the Frenchman, muttering an imprecation, remained silent, and was quite unnerved when the iron bars closed behind him, while the captain, as he saw them distinctly in the bright glare of the station, remarked:

"They are as bad a lot of sinners as we ever bagged together, and if I am not mistaken, we can find other charges against them which will give them a long sojourn up the river, or a picnic on the gallows."

CHAPTER XV.

A FAIR VISITOR.

THE Ideal sailed on time the next day, the testimony of the officers being sufficient against the River Pirates, who were very quickly found guilty of their crime and sent "up the river" for safe keeping.

That each and every one of them had suspected the Frenchman of being the traitor, all believed until they found him incarcerated with them in the prison, though his inclination had been to escape by turning State's

Evidence, only, the chief told him his services were not needed in that way as there was evidence enough to convict him with his brother pals.

The more he pondered over who his strange informant was the more the chief was bewildered and in vain sought a clue.

He had made it his business to go to the court room and look into the face of every individual there and try and thus pick out the one whom he suspected was his 'Unknown Shadower,' but in vain the search; not once did he find a face that he believed was the one he sought.

A conscientious man, he did not like the idea of taking to himself the praise bestowed by the papers, in the instances when he had acted only under secret information.

But, then, he was too shrewd a man to let it be known that his information came from some quarter he knew not where, for that might destroy his secret source of information and perhaps cause the sender of the secret letters to be suspected and put to death.

The more he thought over the subject the more he felt convinced that the writer of the mysterious communications was none other than one of the gang of crooks, one less hardened in conscience than the others, or who acted in the cases from some hope of future personal gain.

Captain Williamson was alone let into his secret, of his unknown correspondent, but the chief had placed a man on watch in his own quarters to note down every one who entered his private room, when he was present or absent, with strict orders that, did he discover any one, save his personal attendant, doing so while he was out, to at once arrest him.

Thus had the chief set a spy upon his own people, and that he might make no mistake, he had made Matt, his assistant, a spy upon one whom he had employed in the service of spying.

"I must get at who this Unknown Shadower is, for as long as I do not it convinces me that there is one better than I and my shadowers are at our own game," muttered the chief as he returned from lunch the day after the crooks, known as the River Pirates, were sentenced.

"A lady waiting to see you, sir," announced Matt, as the chief entered.

It flashed across the chief's mind that he was to receive another communication from the Unknown Shadower, and entering his private room he said shortly:

"Show her in, Matt."

The one who entered was a young girl, and a beautiful one at that.

She was stylishly dressed and bowed in the easy way of one used to refined society.

"Pardon my troubling you, sir, but I deem it my duty to place in your hands this sealed letter, which fell into my hands by accident," she said, and her voice was very musical.

The chief knew a beautiful woman when he saw one, and appreciated beauty as well, so in his courteous way he bade his fair visitor be seated, took the letter and gave a slight start as he recognized the writing and black seal with its weird crest!

"There is no need of my remaining, sir, unless you care to know how I got possession of the letter," said the young girl.

"I should very much like to know, Miss—Miss—"

She handed her card to the chief and he read thereon:

"MISS KATHRINE KENT,

"No. 101 — Avenue."

"I am glad to meet you, Miss Kent, for I know your father quite well."

She bowed in silence and he continued:

"I have received like communications before, and I would like very much to know how this one came into your possession."

"I was down-town shopping, sir, and

entering a cab to drive home I found that letter upon the seat.

"I recognized your name and important position, so decided when I neared home to return and give it to you myself, and not trust it to the cabman!"

"A wise thought, Miss Kent, and I am glad that you brought it, but I suppose that whoever had the cab before you did left it there, so I will, with your permission, send for the cabman, and ask him."

"But I dismissed that cabman, sir, upon reaching home, and drove here in another vehicle."

"Ah! that is bad; but, do you think you would know the cabman again?"

"Yes, sir, and his stand is on Union Square, so, if it is of so much importance to you I can drive there and look him up, in fact, find him for you."

"But I would be giving you so much trouble, Miss Kent."

"Not when I could be doing a service, for I think I discover that it is a matter of importance to you."

"Let me explain, Miss Kent. I have received a number of these letters, and always in a most mysterious manner. They have in each instance been important, and I am anxious to discover the writer, for they all are anonymous."

"With this explanation if you will kindly try and find that hackman for me, I shall be most grateful indeed."

Miss Kent rose, and bowing was escorted to the door by the chief, who glanced out of the window and saw her drive away in a cab.

Then he returned to his desk and sitting down opened the letter which had been brought to him, again in the usual mysterious manner.

CHAPTER XVI.

DUPED.

THE chief opened the letter of the Unknown Shadower with the firm belief that he was again to hear some important information, be given some clue to devilry either done or anticipated.

He was not wrong in his expectations, for the following was what he read:

"A gentleman returning to Boston to-night by the Sound steamer of the Fall River line will carry with him a large lot of diamonds purchased in New York from a lady in reduced circumstances and forced to sell."

"His name is Adam Curtis, a broker of Boston, and he is stopping at the Everett House."

"A gentleman will call upon him there with a letter from his father, the senior member of his firm in Boston, telling him that, feeling anxious for his safety, he has sent the bearer, a detective, to accompany him and protect him until his return to Boston."

"That detective is a New York crook and diamond thief. He intends to drug, perhaps kill, and rob the Boston man on the boat."

THE UNKNOWN SHADOWER.

The chief sprang to his feet, with a show of excitement not natural to him, and paced up and down his room several times.

"In Heaven's name *how* does this unknown get his information, I should like to know?"

"He not only shows how crooks can be caught but gives warning in time to prevent the crime from being committed."

"It is now after two o'clock and there is no time to lose, for once more shall I take heed to this anonymous warning."

Touching a button a detective appeared.

"Gordon, I have a delicate piece of work for you to do. You are to take a pard along, though you are not to appear to know each other."

"Yes, chief."

"You are to go to-night on the Fall River

boat, and find out if a Mr. Adam Curtis of Boston has registered for a room."

"Yes, sir."

"If so, get the state-room on each side of his, if you have to show your badge of authority to do so, and watch for the occupants of the room between yours and your companion's."

"I understand, sir."

"One of these men is a diamond merchant, the other a diamond thief. The latter intends to do the other in some way and rob him."

"Yes, chief."

"Of course there is no need of telling such a good man as you are just what you are to do."

"I'll get Kane to go with me, sir, and we'll talk it over, so as to be ready to save the merchant and nab the thief."

"Do you know what kind of appearing man Mr. Curtis is, sir?"

"I do not; but, watch for him when he gets the key to his stateroom."

Detective Gordon bowed and retired, leaving the chief once more to his meditations.

For some time he sat in silence, then glanced at his watch and muttered:

"I guess the cabman was not on the stand."

But night came, and Miss Kent did not return so, as he was going up home to his dinner he concluded to stop at her home and save her the trouble of returning to his quarters.

On the way he stopped at the Everett House and asked to see Mr. Adam Curtis of Boston.

"Mr. Curtis left for Boston this afternoon, sir," the clerk informed him.

"By train?"

"No, sir; by the Fall River Line."

"I am sorry not to have seen him. Was he alone?"

"A friend from Boston joined him here, sir, and they left together."

The chief smiled grimly, for so far the secret information had proven correct!

Ordering his driver stop at the number of Mr. Kent, he met that gentleman just going into his own door.

"Ah, chief, glad to see you. Come in, though nothing wrong I hope?"

"No, sir; only I wished to see your daughter for a moment, as she was so kind as to bring me an important piece of information this afternoon."

"My daughter, sir?"

"Yes, sir, Miss Kathrine Kent."

"My dear chief you are laboring under a great mistake, for my daughter sailed for Europe with her mother some weeks ago."

The chief looked dazed, but recovering himself he told Mr. Kent how an important letter had been brought to his office by a beautiful young girl, and he handed the card she had given him.

"It is Kathrine's card, for I remember the peculiar style of the lettering; but you have been duped, chief, that is certain."

The chief had already made up his mind that same thing; but laughing it off, and explaining that he had wished to save Miss Kent from coming again to the office, he took his leave.

He felt in no laughing mood, however, and mused as he drove on home regarding the clever girl who had duped him.

"Well, I have made this discovery at least, and that is that the one who brought this last letter did not have any story to tell of its having been given her and all that, but stated that she found it in a cab, and the fact that she gave Miss Kent's card shows that she must have known the contents of the envelope."

"Her looks betrayed to me that my secret informant is in a higher walk in life than I expected to find him or her, for now I am at a loss to know which it is even."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DIAMOND THIEF.

DETECTIVE GORDON and his companion were at the boat in ample time.

They found that Mr. Curtis of Boston had gotten one of the best state-rooms and a friend had registered to occupy it with him.

The state-rooms on each side had been secured by the detectives, and they waited about until they saw Mr. Curtis and his "friend."

Mr. Curtis was a fine-looking, solid-looking man of forty, while his state-room companion was a sleek-faced, clerical-looking person of athletic build and nervous manner.

They enjoyed the scenery of the East River together, and later went down to dinner, and the diamond-merchant ordered a very substantial meal with wine, but drank it alone, for his companion was heard to say, only after the quart bottle was opened:

"You will have to drink it alone, for I never touch intoxicating beverages of any kind."

"Well said, sir," remarked a Prohibitionist sitting near, and he smiled benignly until Mr. Curtis said sharply:

"Mind your own business, sir, and do not interfere with mine."

The Prohibitionist drew back within himself like a turtle and was silent, and Gordon, who was at the same table, muttered:

"That fellow is the diamond-thief's pal. I am glad that I discovered it, though I might have known he was not alone in his work."

After a cigar on deck—and the "friend" did not smoke either, in fact had no bad habits—Mr. Curtis went to his state-room.

"I will follow you in a few minutes," said his companion, and Kane having been put onto the two pals' presence by Detective Gordon, the three officers saw the "friend" and the "Prohibitionist" talk earnestly together for a few minutes.

Then the companion of the Boston merchant followed him to his state-room and the pal went to his quarters which were just opposite.

The two detectives at once sought their state-rooms and prepared to act, and they were anxious not to be too late and thus cause harm to befall Mr. Curtis, for they felt that the two crooks were capable of any crime.

Each detective had already bored a small gimlet-hole through the partitions of their rooms into that of Mr. Curtis, and having no light in theirs they could not be detected.

They could see but very indistinctly, and yet, by placing their ears against the gimlet-holes, they could hear fairly well all that was said by the two men, and they heard one say:

"I don't mind taking a nightcap with you now, Mr. Curtis, but I never drink in public, and on duty, though now there is no danger, as I am sure, if you were shadowed, seeing me with you has thwarted any plan that might have been made up to rob you."

"Bah! there was no danger whatever, save in my father's fears, dear old man; but then I am glad to have your company, so what will you drink?"

"Anything, sir."

"Then another bottle it shall be, for we can sleep it off," and touching the button for a steward, a bottle of champagne was ordered and brought.

The two men drank it together, and Detective Gordon, with his eye on the gimlet-hole, saw the comrade of Mr. Curtis drop something into the last glass that was poured out for him to drink.

"He is too clever to have put a fatal drug—it was a morphine pellet," muttered Gordon, and when the two men had retired he slipped out of his state-room and calling upon Detective Kane the two went to the state-room of the other pal.

He had not locked the door and was discovered seated by the window smoking, not having retired.

"The wrong room, gents," he said, as the two detectives entered.

"This is Number Forty-six is it not?"

"Yes, but it is my state-room all the same, gents."

"It is the right room, and you are the man we are looking for—hands up, quick!"

The man was covered by the detective nearest to him, and who spoke in a low voice, but in a very determined way.

"You have made a mistake, gentlemen, a sad one."

"We are responsible for all mistakes—here!" and his hands were seized and manacled with a skill which only long practice can give.

"Come, you are going too far—I shall call for help—oh!"

But the cry was stifled by an iron grip on the throat: a gag was forced into the mouth and irons put upon his ankles as well.

The sound of the running steamer had drowned all the noise made, and in fact there had been but little, and the attention of no one seemed to have been attracted to the scene.

"You remain in here with him, Kane, and I will call you when I need you."

"It is now twelve and in a few hours we will be at Newport and the other will leave the boat there, so be ready to act," commanded Detective Gordon.

"Count on me when wanted," remarked Detective Kane quietly, and their words told the manacled prisoner that the plot to rob the diamond-merchant was known.

Officer Gordon returned to his state-room and getting into the berth he again put his eye to the gimlet-hole.

What he saw caused him to remain as still as the dead, and it was only after lying there for a long time that he arose and left his state-room for a walk on deck.

The lights of Newport were in sight, and going to Kane's state-room he called him out and the two waited by the side of the merchant's door.

They had not long to wait, for the door softly opened and out stepped the diamond-thief.

As he did so Detective Gordon said:

"I want you, my man."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE UNKNOWN'S ACCUSATION.

THE diamond-thief was a bold man and full of nerve; but he had not suspected that his scheme was known and he was so cleverly caught that he made no effort at resistance.

In fact before he could do so he felt his hands pressed together by his captors and heard the click of the manacles as they were clasped upon him.

He was quickly led to the state-room of his pal, and while officer Kane guarded the two, Detective Gordon crossed back to where the diamond-merchant had been left, at the same time telling a steward to send the captain of the boat to him.

Mr. Curtis lay in his bed breathing heavily, and it was not until a physician on board had been summoned by the captain, that he was aroused from his stupor, and then only after considerable difficulty.

"I believe he would have died if not aroused at the time you found him, sir," said the doctor, and having given his patient some medicine to help him, he left him with the detective who explained to him all that had occurred.

"How on earth did you learn of the plot to rob me?" asked Mr. Curtis when at last he was able to converse.

"I do not know, sir; but the chief heard of it in some way and sent us to entrap the men."

"You will go on to Boston to-day, sir, and

return to go back with us to-night, for I shall hold the prisoners aboard all day?"

"Yes, I will gladly go back with you, but I would like to have you go on to Boston and return with me, for I feel very shaky yet."

"I will go, sir, certainly."

"You have saved diamonds that are worth thirty thousand dollars to my firm, and I shall be glad to reward you as you deserve."

"Thank you, sir, but that is our duty; and we get our pay, and our reward will be in seeing those two men go to prison as thieves, and it came very near for a worse crime."

"Yes, they nearly murdered me, that's a fact," answered Mr. Curtis, and he sought what rest he could, and with Detective Gordon took the early steamer train for Boston, carrying the diamonds which had been taken in the presence of the captain and the passengers from the diamond-thief who had shared the state-room with his victim.

The following morning when the New York chief came to his office he found Detective Gordon awaiting him with his prisoners and Mr. Curtis.

The detective made his report, Mr. Curtis told his story, and handed over the forged letters from his father, written on one of the firm's letter heads, and in imitation of the senior merchant's hand-writing.

"Well, you laid a good plot but it miscarried," said the chief, gazing at the two men, the ringleader responding:

"If you tell me who shadowed us to our ruin I'll give you a cool hundred for the benefit of your force."

"You have no suspicion then of who my informant was?" asked the chief, only wishing that it was in his power to get that hundred dollars for the benefit of his force.

"Not the slightest, for but three of us were in it."

"Who was the third?"

"That would be telling."

"Have you no idea of where you were tracked?"

"None."

"Where was your plot planned?"

"In Boston, where that fool heard of the diamonds for sale, and arranged to start for them."

The chief was about to reply when the attendant entered with a letter and the remark: "It is important, sir, and the messenger awaits your answer."

The chief opened the envelope quickly, and beheld another one inside.

"This one was sealed with black, addressed in a now well-known hand, to the chief, and the skull and clasped hands crest was upon it."

"Matt, show that messenger in here at once," cried the chief before he opened the inner envelope.

The attendant hastened from the room to obey, but returned with the information that the messenger had disappeared.

"Who was he?" roared the chief to the surprise of all present, and Matt, who stuttered when excited, could hardly speak, but at last got out that it was a messenger-boy.

"Send in every direction after that boy," commanded the chief, and half a dozen officers started off.

In the meanwhile the chief opened the envelope and read:

"If Mr. Adam Curtis wishes to know who the ally of the diamond thieves is, he will find him in one named Reuben Ashley, whoever and wherever he may be, for that is the right man."

"THE UNKNOWN SHADOWER."

The chief quickly folded the letter, heard the reports of the various men regarding their inability to find the messenger, and then asked:

"Mr. Curtis, do you know a man by the name of Reuben Ashley?"

"Oh, yes, sir; he is our confidential clerk."

"I will wire to your father to have him arrested, for he is the ally of these men."

"Impossible, sir!"

"It is true, sir," responded the chief with full confidence in the secret report of The Unknown Shadower.

CHAPTER XIX.

OLIVE'S REFUGE.

It will be well now to return to the hero and heroine of my story, who the reader will remember left the old mansion together to go and seek a hiding-place for Olive in the home of one whom Graveyard Jack felt that he could trust.

The home of Mrs. Herbert, for such was the woman's name, was a cozy cottage situated on the river, and owning her little place the widow made a fair living by doing fancy work for the rich families who were her customers.

Leading the way, Jack entered the little yard and halting at the door rung the bell.

It was answered by the rising of a window in the floor above and a woman's voice asked:

"Well, what do you want and who are you?"

"It is Jack, Mrs. Herbert."

"Will you please dress and come down?"

"What Jack?"

"Graveyard Jack, Mrs. Herbert, and it is important that I see you."

"I will come down in a few minutes, Jack," was the answer in a changed tone of voice, and in a short while the door opened and Mrs. Herbert said:

"Come right in—are you sick, or have you been hurt?"

"Neither, thank you, ma'm; but I am not alone."

"Who is with you?"

"My sister," said Jack after a moment of hesitation.

"Of course bring her in; but you never told me that you had a sister."

"I only found her to-day, Mrs. Herbert, and I want you to give her a home with you for a while, for I will pay her board."

"Nonsense, Jack; don't talk about paying me, when what would my home be to-day but for your saving my little ones from death? Come right in, my child, and welcome."

In stepped Olive, then, and Mrs. Herbert gazed at the beautiful girl, with surprised admiration for an instant and then she said:

"You are more than welcome for your brother's sake as well as your own. May I kiss you, dear, for I love good, noble Jack."

Such a welcome made the tears come into Olive's eyes and she kissed the kind-hearted woman and said:

"I know I will be happy with you."

"I know that, too, Olive; but, Mrs. Herbert, let me tell you that it is a secret, for no one must know who Olive is, or why she is here, and she'll go as your help, you know, for she don't wish any one to find her until she is willing to have them do so."

"That is all I can tell you now, and you know I would not do one wrong act to get you into trouble."

"I know that well, Jack, although folks have said I ought not let you come to see my little children, and they try to make you out all that is bad, saying that you live in a graveyard and rob people to get money."

"It's a lie! a cruel lie, Mrs. Herbert, for I would not rob any one of a cent!" fiercely protested the youth, while Olive responded:

"I know it is false, Mrs. Herbert, for Jack would not be guilty of a crime."

"Bless your sweet soul do you believe I think that he would? No indeed! I know that boy too well to think ill of him, miss; cut come, let me show you into the spare room, and you bring her traps, Jack."

This the shadower detective did, and then saying that he would come on the following night he glided away as silently as a ghost.

Leaving the little cottage he hastened along, for dawn was not far off, and in a short while re-entered the grounds of the old mansion.

What secret the house held seemed to hold no terrors for him, as he stood calmly surveying it for a few minutes, and then walked on toward the rear of the mansion.

Coming to a high wall he climbed a tree near it, and thus reached the top, along which he walked for a few yards when he reached a spot where he dropped down into the inclosure beyond.

It was bright starlight now, and he beheld about him the monuments of the dead.

Their snowy whiteness had gone from them under the touch of time and mold, and yet they looked like grim specters in the darkness, as grim as the ghastly skeleton forms would have looked that lay beneath them.

But in their midst was Graveyard Jack's home and the place held no terrors for him.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GAMIN DETECTIVE AT HOME.

To one who had beheld the form of Graveyard Jack, gliding along among the moss-covered graves and moldy tombs, it would have been a startling sight.

But, no one saw him there, as not a soul else than he dared visit that ghostly spot by night and few ever set foot there by day, for those who had kindred there at rest had long before moved away and few held interest in the old cemetery save for the value it would bring as town lots, when the ashes of the dead must be moved to make way for the living.

Graveyard Jack had too often traversed those weed-grown paths to feel dread of aught he found there, and going to the center of the burying-ground, where there was a hill and some heavy timber, he glided in among some larger monuments and halted at the iron door of a massive vault.

There was a lock in the hasp, but it readily opened, the heavy door swung back on its hinges and in stepped the fearless boy, drawing it to behind him, that no glimmer of light might be seen from a distance and betray his presence there.

A match was struck, a candle lighted, and the interior was revealed.

It was what Jack was pleased to call "comfortable," yes, even cozy, but to any one else as an abiding-place it would have been deemed appalling, ghastly, spectral and forbidding.

There were a dozen apertures for bodies, all but three of them closed up and with the dead inside, for the inscriptions were upon the marble slabs that closed them, and told who of the Maxwell blood were buried therein.

There was a space between them and the iron door of some fully ten feet in width and fifteen in length, and its marble flooring was covered with a carpet.

Against one end of the vault hung a *portiere*, behind which was a cot with bedding upon it.

In the other end was a table, above which hung a shelf on which were a number of books.

Writing materials were upon the table, while some clothes hung under a curtain against the wall.

In one of the open spaces for coffins was some food, as though it was used as a refrigerator, and placing this upon the table and drawing up an easy-chair, the only one in the vault, Graveyard Jack sat down to eat his late supper, or his early breakfast, as he might consider it, with evident relish.

There was an opening in the iron door, and a chimney-pot was pushed through the arched top to the surface outside, and the arches and some wood in one corner showed that Graveyard Jack had built a fire there at times when he needed it.

Having partaken of his repast, the youth undressed himself, put out his candle and went to bed, as though he felt perfectly at home in his dismal quarters.

But he was awake before the sun had long been up, and, after taking a careful observation, slipped out of the cemetery into a lane and made his way, at a brisk pace, to a more thickly settled part of the city.

The Gamin Detective entered a cheap restaurant, and ordering his breakfast, he took out of his pocket a sheet of paper and an envelope, and proceeded to write a letter.

This done, he addressed the envelope, and sealing it, he stamped it with a ring he took from his pocket, and then put it carefully away, while he ate his breakfast with the air of one who enjoyed it.

Having finished his breakfast and paid the check, he sauntered on down-town with an evident purpose in view.

What that purpose was is known to the reader, as, a couple of hours after, the old lady in black handed to the Secret Service chief the letter from "The Unknown Shadower," giving the information regarding the murder of Miser Max, and what would be found by a search of the old Haunted House.

Having accomplished his purpose, of making known to the chief the double tragedy of the night before, Jack had still another work to do, judging from his actions, for he went through the lowest slums of the city, every now and then meeting a fairly well-dressed youth or ragged urchin with whom he held a few words of consultation.

At last he continued his way back toward the upper part of the city, going now to the west side and at last halting on the end of a long pier, where he sat down as though to rest and enjoy the view out upon the river.

He had not been there very long before a freckle-faced red-headed youth sauntered up and sat down near him.

In a few moments more another boy arrived, of even less attractive appearance, and in an hour's time nearly a dozen youths had gathered there and sat swinging their legs over the end of the pier, yet attentively listening to what Jack was telling them in a low tone, that no one a dozen paces away could have heard.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BOY POLICE.

"If you says so, cap'n, it's got to be did, though I never goes nigh a graveyard, and didn't want ter until I went thar with feet fu'st."

"I hain't stuck on graveyards myself, but I'm not one ter kick ag'in' ther dead."

"No more am I."

"Ther graveyard goes, then."

"No one goes to ther graveyard."

"Now hain't that smart?"

"Well, the cap'n says meet at ther graveyard, so I'm in it with both feet."

"Yas, we'll all be in it, head and feet some day."

"Why, boys, I don't see why you are all so afraid of the dead," said Graveyard Jack, with a light laugh, as he listened to the remarks of his pards when he appointed a rendezvous in what was known as "Jack's Boneyard" that night at twelve.

"We hain't afeerd of ther dead, cap'n Jack, but ther ghosts," said one.

"Nonsense, there is no such thing as ghosts, or I would have seen one of them long ago."

"Yas, you boards in ther same hotel with 'em, that's a fact."

"Well, the graveyard is the place of meeting to night, so come one at a time by the lane entrance."

"Can't we come all in a heap, cap'n?"

"No, for the police would be onto you very quickly, and you know that they will be very watchful up there now, as the miser was murdered."

"Come alone, and I'll meet you inside wall, for there is to be one there whom I will you all to meet."

"We'll be there, cap'n."

"And remember, you must tell the other boys, for all must come, as to-night I intend to give you some good news."

With this Jack left the party, which soon after broke up, dispersing to their various haunts in the city.

Taken altogether they were a bright lot of lads, ranging from twelve to twenty years of age, and as different in appearance and nature as were the clothes they wore.

They were not a hard-looking lot either, if one analyzed their faces, but youths who had courage, determination and intelligence, with a sense of honor to guide them.

Many of them had seen the very worst phases of life, and had known all there was of hardship and suffering.

Others had seen better days, and from the many whom he had come in contact with Graveyard Jack had selected his allies in a good work.

He had sifted the tares from the wheat, and an alliance had been formed by which they meant to earn an honest living and yet do good service.

They were lovers of adventure, those who preferred an honest career to one of crime, who had seen all there was of evil in a criminal career and were glad to turn from it to a better life when the chance came to them.

That chance came when Graveyard Jack, innocent of intentional wrong-doing, had been made a fugitive, an outcast, yet would not descend to become what it seemed all about him, men, women and children even, wished him to be, a crook, one to live upon his fellows, to rob honest people of their hard earnings, to get gold, even did they have to kill to get it.

It was an idea of the Gamin Detective, hunted himself, for the police who saw him, felt that he was a crook, though they had never been able to catch him in a lawless act, to show to the Secret Service chief that he was not bad; that, living among the wicked, he was able to render better service than the detectives sent among them for a special purpose.

Once he could build up a name for himself, have rewards awaiting his call, he would make himself known, explain first how circumstantial evidence had driven him away a fugitive, and let his good deeds stand against his alleged sins, and become what his ambition was to make of himself, a great detective.

Believing himself more hunted than he was, that his adopted parents were still searching for him to have him hanged for killing the young man whom he had shot for a burglar, and that if called upon as a witness in certain scenes he knew of, he would at once be seized and held for trial, the poor lad had made his home where he knew the superstitious fears of many men would not allow them to come, and there he had lived alone in his gruesome quarters.

He had saved up his money, so had quite a snug sum to help his aids along with, and hoped to be able to earn more, for now and then a reward came their way which was put in the common treasury.

Once he had restored a lost pocketbook in which there was a large sum of money, and his recompense had been generous.

"One of the lads had found a diamond pin, and when they saw the reward offered, it was returned to the owner."

Another had thwarted the intention of some thieves to break into a jewelry store by divulging their plan, and others had in various ways earned money for deeds that a casual glance at them would not have allowed any one to suspect them of such a sense of honor.

But, it is a mistaken notion that all in

the slums are dishonest, for crime and evil deeds are found in the fashionable homes as well as in the lowest quarters of the city, only they are more generally hidden from view.

His dealings with the chief of the Secret Service Jack determined should all be of a mysterious nature, and so it was that he set his boy police to gleaning all the information of premeditated crime, and notifying the chief of it in a way that the source could not be traced.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MASKED MASCOT.

THE night came on dark and threatening rain, the wind howled among the trees, and sent the leaves skurrying along through the old graveyard with a sound like rattling bones.

The Gamin Detective had built a fire in his vault and made all as comfortable as possible to receive his guests, while he had laid out on the table quite a spread for them, which he knew would be appreciated.

At the time appointed he walked out of his gruesome abode and looked about him.

"This threatening storm makes the old place still more gloomy, and I almost fear some of the lads will back out and not come, though what they are afraid of I do not see," and he walked over to the wall near the lane where he had agreed to meet his comrades.

He had just gotten there when a form that was standing inside the wall darted away like a deer, and with a bound was out of the graveyard flying in terror.

But, Jack was quick to give a call, a peculiar whistle which the boy police all knew, and the flying form came to a halt, just as he was stampeding half a dozen others who were creeping cautiously into the lane.

"It's Jack, you scared idiots!" said the first one to fly, and one of the lads answered:

"Oh, we wasn't scart, only we was a-gittin' out o' your way, Shinny, for you was a-comin' in great shape."

A low laugh followed this rally, but the laughter seemed like hollow mockery in that spot and they stood in silence until Jack's signal was a second time heard.

Then they began to scale the wall, while others who had come into the lane and stood afar off now came forward.

"One, two, three," counted Jack as they came over until he had discovered that all were there, and he said:

"Yes, we are all here—thirteen."

"Cap'n, they tells me thirteen is an uncommon unlucky number," said one.

"There are fourteen of us, boys, for there is one for you yet to meet," and Graveyard Jack led the way among the graves to his own quarters.

The boys kept close at his heels, none of them seeming anxious to bring up the rear, and all of them gazing about them at the spectral-looking stones.

"That's a ghost, sart in as I live," whispered one, and all came to a halt.

"Don't be a fool, Pepper, for it is a marble image of an angel," said Jack, and he went forward and placed his hand upon the monument.

Thus reassured, yet ready as mustangs to stampede, the boys went on until their leader halted at the vault where he had his quarters.

A heavy blanket hung over the iron door to keep the light from showing to distant windows when it was opened, and Jack ushered his ferrets into the vault, all shuddering as they entered.

Several had been there before by daylight, but not one at night, though all knew the graveyard and that Jack had made his quarters there both day and night.

"Now, pards, I have things to say to you: so sit down there on the cot and the board bench, for I rigged that up to-day for you."

The lads obeyed, glancing timidly at the inscriptions upon the slabs so near to them.

"I told you that we had fourteen in our league, for I have one to make known to you to night who has joined us, and who I am sure will be our mascot."

"Who she is, for it's a girl, you will not know, for she will be masked, and will be known to you only as our mascot and our queen; but I will vouch for her as one of us; and one who will help us in many ways."

"Now, lads, you pitch in here and feed yourselves until my return, for I am going after the mascot," and Jack suddenly slipped out of the door and the ferrets were left alone.

They looked at each other curiously at first, but then they felt there was safety in numbers and Shinny set the example of "feeding," and soon all pitched in and enjoyed the repast, which Jack had supplied.

Then they begun to discuss this new member of their league, and several shook their heads dubiously, while one remarked:

"I don't like her being a gal, for in my experience no gal kin keep a secret."

"That's so," one remarked.

"She'll git us all hanged yet," urged another.

"What fer?"

"We hain't doin' nothin' wrong, but is really running down crooks, with ther perlice chasin' us ourselves as crooks."

"They is away off, for we hain't crooked."

And so the discussion was going on, when suddenly the door opened and Graveyard Jack stood before them.

But he was not alone, for by his side stood a slender form dressed in black, and with a sable mass covering her face completely.

"Boys, this is our Masked Mascot, and she is our Queen as well."

The crowd very nearly broke out into a cheer, but were silenced by mutual consent, while the Masked Mascot said in a voice that won them all:

"I must shake hands with those who are to be my comrades, my fellow-ferrets in a good cause, so tell me your names, for I will not forget you."

The ferrets were won at once, and each one gave his name, or nick-name, as the Masked Mascot warmly grasped his hand.

"Now, comrades, Jack here has told me of the good work you have done, and I am with you heart and soul, and will help all in my power."

"After a short while we will have another place of meeting, less weird than this, and each week we will meet and compare notes, and I am to be your treasurer, so when you need money, send me word by Captain Jack, and he will tell you the work you are to do. Good-night all!" and the Masked Mascot left the vault, accompanied by Jack, who led her from the graveyard and then back to the cottage of the Widow Herbert, where she had found a pleasant home.

"I tell you, Olive, those ferrets are never idle. They go everywhere, pick up all they hear, and the reports they bring in have given me several most important criminal secrets which I make known in a mysterious way to the chief."

"I've got a post-office now for the boys to deposit their reports, so we'll be receiving them all the time, and they are getting places as hotel boys, messenger boys, and other employment that will help us greatly; but you are home now, so I must go back and get the boys out of the cemetery," and Jack returned, and to the great delight of his ferrets, guided them out of the burying-ground, while he went back alone to his gloomy home.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE VAILED LADY.

THE chief had heard nothing from his Unknown Shadower correspondent for some

time, and he and Captain Williamson were discussing the many services he had rendered, when the attendant announced a lady visitor.

She was admitted, and was stylishly dressed and graceful, but wore a veil that was impenetrable.

"Be seated, madam," and the chief placed a chair near his own.

The lady sat down and looked toward Captain Williamson, as though she wished to be alone with the chief.

The captain saw her look, understood it and with a bow retired.

"Are you the chief of the Metropolitan Secret Service, may I ask, sir?"

"I am, madam."

"Are you acquainted with one who calls himself The Unknown Shadower?"

The chief started and replied:

"I have had communications from such a person, madam."

"I can only explain my call upon you, sir, by stating that I was called upon at my home by a youth who asked me to bear this letter to you, and his excuse was, for requesting me, a stranger to be the bearer of it, that he dared not come himself."

The lady handed over an envelope bearing the well-known seal of The Unknown Shadower, and addressed to the chief in the handwriting of the other communications.

"May I ask, madam, who it is that I have to thank for this service?" asked the chief courteously.

In response the lady took out a card from a well-filled and handsome purse, and said:

"I wish, sir, to remain unknown, save to you, in this transaction, the nature of which I am ignorant of, but as the young man told me that it was a case of life and death, I could not refuse him the earnest request that he made of me to bring the letter personally to you, so I ordered my carriage and drove here at once."

"Again I thank you, madam. You shall not be known in the matter I assure you," and the chief glanced at the card, which held a name and address upon one of the fashionable streets.

As the lady arose to go the chief asked:

"Will you describe this youth to me, madam?"

"A young man of seventeen or eighteen, well dressed, courteous in manner, and one who had the look of being sincere and honest."

"A description that will answer to thousands," muttered the chief, while aloud he said:

"Gave he no name?"

"Upon the card he sent up was the name John Oliver, sir."

"Thank you, madam," and as the chief escorted the lady to the door he glanced from his window and saw a stylish carriage with a coachman in livery.

Then he pressed a button and Detective Gordon appeared.

"Quick, Gordon! Follow that carriage and find out all you can about its occupant."

The detective darted out of the room and two minutes after was in a cab following the carriage of the veiled lady.

The chief having sent a shadower on the track of his visitor, returned to his seat and opened his letter with the remark:

"Now what is it this time, I wonder?"

As he read his face slightly changed color, and rising he went to a door and called for Captain Williamson.

"What, another one, chief?" queried the captain as he entered and saw the letter.

"Yes; read it."

The officer read aloud:

"You have been requested to come alone to-night to hear the confession of a dying woman of a crime committed years ago."

"You are going to a house where there is

a plot formed to take your life, by Anarchists whose schemes you have lately discovered, and they intend to kill you before you can lay your plans to entrap them.

"Have men follow you and you will entrap your game; but, go alone and your life will be the forfeit."

"THE UNKNOWN SHADOWER."

"Well, chief, I would certainly heed this warning, for you have secured information lately against some anarchists."

"I have, and I have agreed to go to the house in question to-night to hear a woman's dying confession."

"Here is the number, so have your men ready to follow me in when I enter, and cut off all avenues of escape."

The two officers talked together for some time, and the plan was thoroughly arranged to thwart the plot of assassination, and the captain left to get his men in readiness for the work.

Hardly had he departed when detective Gordon entered.

"Well, Gordon, back so soon?"

"Yes, sir."

"What luck?"

"The lady drove to Number — East Thirty-fifth street, sir, and entered the house, the carriage then went to a stable near."

"I learned from the stableman that the carriage belonged there, but was not private property—that it had been hired by the hour and sent to the number named."

"I then went to the house and rung the bell, intending to make an excuse for calling."

"There was no response to the bell, and I noticed that the outer door was closed, so I went next door and was told the house was for rent, furnished; there was no occupant in it, but that a lady had gotten the key several hours before to look through it, a carriage had called there for her, and had brought her back again."

"And the lady's card I gave you?"

"Is the lady living next door, sir, and who owns the houses?"

"Duped again, and by a woman; but I am much obliged to you, Gordon, for you have most thoroughly done your work," and as the detective left the room the chief sprang to his feet and paced the floor, a strange expression upon his face as he mused over the clever manner in which each time most valuable information had been given him, while the informant had cleverly concealed his identity.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MIDNIGHT VISITOR.

It was a stormy night on the Sound, but a small sloop seemed to be making good headway, as she headed in toward the Long Island shore, where there was a small harbor.

Entering the haven the anchor was dropped and a boat put off for the shore containing a number of persons.

A light burned in a house on a hill, not far distant, and toward this the party wended their way, all but two remaining in the shadow of the trees.

Those two ascended to the piazza and one of them knocked loudly at the door.

"Who is there?" asked a voice from the window.

"A gentleman wishes to see Mr. Roger Thurston."

"Who is he?"

"An officer of the law."

"What do you want with me?"

"Come down and see."

There was a delay of some time and then the door opened and a man of middle age appeared holding a lamp in his hand.

"Come in and state your business," he said gruffly.

"You shall soon know it."

"Where is your wife?"

"Up-stairs in bed."

"All right; we shall need her too."

"Now, Roger Thurston, I demand that you sit down there and write your confession of a crime concealed by you years ago."

"A crime? I am guilty of no crime!" gasped the man.

"You are guilty, for you sought to fasten a crime upon one who was innocent, to protect the honor of your son, who you well knew had attempted to rob you, and was shot as a burglar."

"Now, sir, tell that story as you know it to be, sign it, and you will not be prosecuted, but refuse, and you go with me this night to prison."

"My God! I feared it would come, some day, but I believed you dead, long ago—lost that same night in the storm on the Sound."

"I recognize you now, John."

"Then you know I am no longer content to rest under the charge of having killed your son in a quarrel, when you are well aware, as your wife told you then, that your son was robbing you—that, believing him to be a burglar, I entered the room, was shot at by him and returning the fire killed him."

"I heard your plot to spare his honor and accuse me, and in my fright I fled."

"Now write your confession and sign it, for I have witnesses here who will testify to its being genuine. This gentleman is a magistrate whom I brought along to take your acknowledgment of your guilt."

"And you will not prosecute me?"

"Upon one condition."

"Name it."

"That you give to me the papers that will prove *who I am*."

"I am glad to get the load off my mind," sighed the man.

"And your wife must then sign as you do."

"I will be glad to do so, for that wrong has haunted me, John, ever since that night," and the woman glided into the room, having followed her husband down-stairs and heard all.

The confession was written by the man and read over.

Two of the muffled forms outside were called in the witness the signing of it by Roger Thurston and his wife, and then the magistrate put his name and seal upon it.

Folding the precious document carefully, the assumed officer of the law placed it securely away in an inner pocket, and then said:

"I once heard you tell your wife that you had been shipmates with my father and knew all about him and had been present at his death. Is that not so?"

"Yes, John."

"I believe you have some papers of his."

"I have a confession that he made, John, before he died, and which he gave to me when he asked me to care for his children."

"I was not the only child then?"

"No."

"Where is the other?"

"I do not know, and I only found you by an accident."

"You have that confession now?"

"I have."

"And will give it to me?"

"If you will pledge me your word that you will not prosecute my wife or myself, or our confession of conspiracy against you, and also will not take any steps against me when you discover what there is in your father's dying words."

"What! Had *you* a hand in his death?" cried the youth.

"Oh no! *no!* We were the best of friends, and I served him, as you will see when you read what he wished me to write down for him."

"Give me your pledge, and you shall have all the papers."

"I give you the pledge. Now get me the papers."

The man left the room and in a few

minutes returned with a large envelope tied up with red tape and sealed.

Upon it was written:

"Nathan Chandler Papers."

Jack took the papers and said quietly:

"I have nothing to thank you for, Roger Thurston, so will not waste words in doing so."

"I have not forgotten you, or your and your wife's sin against me for your son's sake, as my visit to you this night proves, Good-night."

And, half an hour after the little sloop was sailing swiftly back to New York City from whence she had started at nightfall.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FOILED LAWYER.

The chief had gone to the place, where an appointment had been made with him to hear the dying confession of a woman, who had the story of a crime to make known.

But in some way the plotters had been warned of the scheme to entrap them and had fled.

Those in the house told how there had been some rough-looking men occupying the top floor of the house, but that they had hastily departed a couple of hours before the chief called, carrying their belongings with them, and a little girl had heard one of the men run up the stairs and call out to the others:

"It's no go, for the chief are on to us and have set a trap to catch us."

Then the men had hastily departed.

Other inquiries of the occupants on the lower floor convinced the chief that he had been rightly warned by The Unknown Shadower, and that the men were really anarchists and a bad lot, and he set the failure to capture them down to its real cause, that the police had made too great a display in setting their trap and thus had aroused the suspicion of the gang, causing them to take flight.

What the bad lot had left behind was enough to convince the chief and his men that they were the worst kind of crooks and it was a cause of general regret among the officers that the vile gang had escaped them.

It was some days after this that the chief received through the mail, under cover of an outer envelope, another communication from The Unknown Shadower, and which was as follows:

"Your men were too eager to protect you and entrap your intended assassins, so gave them warning of the trap set for them."

"The gang, seven of them, now have their quarters at the number inclosed, near Peck Slip, so keep your eye on them for in due time they will run their heads into the noose."

"Another thing: let me advise that you shadow Lawyer Brackette, for you will find he is trying to sell the property he can get cash for, left by Miser Max to his heir: then he will skip the country, for he is largely in debt, as he is secretly a gambler, living a double life."

"He has not yet disposed of the property, but is negotiating a deal."

"By informing him that you know what he is doing, you can force him to transfer this property to other hands that are honest, for the heiress will claim her own in time."

"THE UNKNOWN SHADOWER."

The chief read this over twice and then putting on his hat prepared to go out.

"There is no need of shadowing that lawyer to be convinced that he is playing a sharp game, for while doing so he may accomplish his purpose and get away, and with all left in his hands the law could not touch him, I fear."

"No, the Unknown Shadower has given me correct information. I will go and play

a bluff game with this limb of the law, whom I always suspected to be tricky."

So saying, the chief left his quarters and a quarter of an hour after was in the attorney's office.

"Mr. Brackette," he said, sternly, "there is no need of mincing matters with you so I will tell you frankly that I have come here to make a demand upon you."

The lawyer turned pale, but answered:

"Is it a demand for hush-money, sir?"

"No, I am not of your stripe, thank God, a robber of those whose trust is in your hands."

"I don't understand, sir, and I will not—"

"Oh, yes, you will, for you have been shadowed, and I have the proof that you have been trying to sell for cash certain property left in your keeping by Maxwell, known as Miser Max."

"I know that you owe a great deal of money, gambling debts and others, and that, taking advantage of the estate left in your hands, to await the coming of its heiress, you are trying to defraud her and leave the country with her fortune turned into good gold coin, so I tell you that you will do as I demand, or you will be shown up in your true light by my exposure of you."

"My God, chief, don't do that, for I have done no wrong."

"No, for I headed you off in your scheme."

"What do you ask of me?"

"I simply demand that you at once transfer this estate from your keeping into honest hands, lawyers who will act squarely with it and the heiress, and men whom I will name, for I will see them and—"

"One moment please."

"Well?"

"Name the men and I will go to them myself, this very hour, and make the request that they take the estate in their keeping, that I will turn it at once over to them intact."

"By so doing I will not be compromised, and—"

"You do not deserve any mercy, Brackette, but if you do as you say, and at once, and the estate is intact, I will allow you to go to these gentlemen. Here are their names; but remember, until the transfer is consummated I will shadow you like a hound."

"You may trust me, chief, indeed you may," cried the thoroughly frightened lawyer.

"I shall expect a visit from you tomorrow, telling me you have made the transfer," and the chief departed pleased with his call.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A FATHER'S CONFESSION.

It was not for some days after his midnight visit with the magistrate and his Boy Police, to the home of Roger Thurston, that Graveyard Jack had the courage to look over the papers given him by the man who had been his adopted father.

He had also in his possession another paper, one which he had not given to Olive and which he had not even read himself.

He had found it in the secret closet with the treasure of Miser Max and upon the envelope was written:

"My confession of crime and my endeavor to atone."

Driven to his dismal abode one night, by a severe storm, Jack closed the door, lighted his candle and sat down to muse, as was his wont.

"Well, our Boy Police are doing good work, and some day we, who are regarded as young crooks, will be able to show our deeds, claim our rewards and demand recognition as the real detectives and shadowers we have shown ourselves to be."

"But I wish to get Olive out of it, for she is too noble a girl to be allied with such as we are, and if the chief makes that haul all right of the Masked Angels, I wrote him about, at one swoop we will get hold of the murderers of old Miser Max and she will thus be avenged, for though they may not all hang the guilty one certainly will."

"I feel like a different being now, since I got that confession from Thurston and his wife, that I was not the murderer of their son."

"That brings up to my mind that I have not yet read my father's confession. I must—yes I will do so now."

He took out of a hiding-place in the vault the envelope given him by Thurston, and also the paper taken from the chimney closet in the old mansion of Miser Max.

Opening the paper he read:

"Having received my mortal wound, and with the fear of death before my eyes, I here wish to tell the story of my unhappy life."

Here followed the story of his love for Mabel Maxwell, her father's refusal to allow her to wed him, their secret marriage, and the killing of his young wife in the grounds by mistaking her for him, as she was dressed in male attire.

His unhappy wanderings after her death were told, and how, several years after, he had been nursed through an attack of illness by a beautiful girl whom he had learned to love for her devotion to him and had made her his wife.

But her parents had discarded her for marrying a poor man and a sailor, and adversity had followed, until while he was away upon a long voyage his wife had died, his children became separated, his daughter having been kidnapped, while the boy was afterward found and cared for by his old mate, Roger Thurston.

One night, through a fire, he had discovered his lost daughter and was happy in taking her to his home until he went to sea again, when Thurston was to also take care of her, but the hatred of Paul Maxwell for him had never died away, and finally he had dogged the sailor to his death, for, landing one night upon the shore, near his home, he had demanded that he should meet him in a duel, stating that he had been the cause of all his unhappiness and hence he sought revenge upon him, or death at his son-in-law's hands.

Nathan Chandler, thus forced into the duel, had fired into the air, while the bullet of the other had ended his life.

Such was the confession that Jack read of his father's life, only the name of Paul Maxwell was not given, and it did not seem that Thurston knew it.

For a long time did Jack sit and ponder over what he had read until at last he said:

"If the confession of Olive's grandfather is as cruel a one, she must not see it. I will read it too."

It was opened and found to be dated at the old mansion a short while before his death.

"Duty compels me," read Jack, "to write here the secret of my life."

"There are many yet living who will remember how my loved daughter was killed by my own hand one night in my grounds, I believing her to be, as she was dressed in male attire, her lover, who her dying words told me was in reality her husband."

"With such a curse upon my life I was broken-hearted, and in time became revengeful against the man who had made me the slayer of my child."

"So at last I sought him out, one fateful night, determined that he should die by my hand, or I fall by his."

"He met me in a duel with pistols, at my demand; he fired his shot into the air but I killed him."

"Then I was avenged, but more wretched

than ever, and my life became more and more a curse."

"At last I repented of my sin, my double sin against Nathan Chandler, and sought to atone for it. I went to his house and claimed his daughter the day after his burial, his little Olive."

"I claimed to be her grandfather, said that I was rich and would do all in my power to make her happy, and so I took her and claimed her as my own."

"But, duty compels me to make this confession, though I pray Heaven it may never reach her eyes."

"When I am called away all that I have shall go to her, and that all is a great fortune for I am a very rich man, as my attorney, Adam Brackette, can vouch."

"Such have been my crimes and my atonement, if atonement it is."

"PAUL MAXWELL."

To the end without a word of comment, did Graveyard Jack read this confession of Miser Max, and when he had finished it his face had a strange expression upon it.

He looked years older, and, seizing his hat, he walked out into the night, unmindful of the storm that was raging.

CHAPTER XXVII.

UNITED.

"OLIVE, I have come to have a talk with you."

So said the boy chief of the Police League the morning after having read the confessions of his father, and that of Miser Max.

"Why, Jack, has anything gone wrong? You look haggard and ill."

"I am all right now, but I have had a hard night of it, and, also, I have something to tell you."

"Yes, Jack."

"Where is Mrs. Herbert?"

"Gone out to market."

"And the children?"

"She took them with her."

"Then we are alone?"

"Yes."

"Olive, I told you that I would be a brother to you."

"And you have been, Jack, indeed you have."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Olive, for I am in truth your real and true brother."

"Yes, we made that compact."

"This is no compact, but a reality—a wonderful reality."

"Why, Jack?"

"You believe yourself the granddaughter of Miser Max?"

"Am I not? Did he not say I was?"

"No, you are not, though your father was secretly married to his daughter."

"Yes."

"Mr. Maxwell killed his own daughter, mistaking her in the darkness for your father, as she was dressed in man's clothes, and that was one of the curses upon that old man's life."

"A terrible one, indeed!"

"Yes, but there was another."

"Another curse, Jack? What can you mean?"

"Yes; your father married, several years after the tragedy, a lovely woman, and there were two children born, a son and a daughter."

"Their mother died, and—well, you were the daughter, and your career, as you have told me, was your lot; but the boy was adopted by a man named Thurston."

"Yes."

"Mr. Maxwell's hatred for your father continued, and in revenge upon him, as having been the cause of his taking his daughter's life, he challenged him to a secret duel, and killed him."

"Before your father died, however, he made a confession, which I read last night, and I read Paul Maxwell's confession, also."

"That he might atone for his crimes Maxwell boldly went to the house of the man he had killed and claimed to be your grandfather, and so adopted you."

"Oh Jack! how strange all this is!"

"It is stranger still, as you will see, Olive. You were reared as his granddaughter, and to be his heiress."

"Never! not a dollar would I touch of his money, he who killed my poor father from a cruel revenge!" almost fiercely cried Olive.

"That is just what I expected you to say. But, Olive, there is more to tell; you are indeed my own sister."

"Your own sister?"

"Yes, for my father left a confession, and in it he told the story that Maxwell told; and more: he made known what became of his son."

"Ah, Jack!"

"Your father's true name was Nathan Chandler, Olive."

"Yes."

"And Nathan Chandler was my father also, Olive."

Words can never portray the feelings of girl, the joy of the youth at the strange discovery made.

"I have the papers to prove all I say, Olive, Roger Thurston's statement, his wife's also, the confession of our father and of Paul Maxwell."

"Yes, you remembered that you had a little brother, and now it is proven I am that brother."

"Now, are you the heiress of Miser Max or not?"

"No! a thousand times no! Jack; I am your sister; that is fortune enough for me!"

"I was sure that you would say this, that you would cast that old man's fortune from you, for he was the slayer of your father and mine."

"But the future looks bright to me now; for I have found you, Olive."

CONCLUSION.

LAWYER BRACKETTE was sharp on time, to report that he had made the transfer of the Maxwell estate to those into whose hands the chief had told him to place the property.

The attorney went back to his office an humbled man, and one who felt that he had learned the truth of the adage that "honesty is the best policy."

But the chief had another surprise in store for him, as, one day, he received by Express a package of papers.

One was the confession of Miser Max; another was the confession of Nathan Chandler; a third was the statement of Roger Thurston and his wife, of their conspiracy against their adopted son, John, and a fourth was the relinquishment, by Olive Chandler, of all claim as heiress of the Maxwell estate, and a draft for the amount of money found in the old mansion as the miser's hoarded-up treasure.

There were a few lines asking that the confession should be received in confidence. This request was simply signed, as the secret communications to the chief had been, with the words:

"THE UNKNOWN SHADOWER."

Many a letter came afterward to the chief, bearing valuable and unexpected information, so that, in time, he came to regard his Secret Police League with its Girl Queen as his most valuable aides in ferreting out crime in the great city of New York.

THE END.

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